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Walt Disney's HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

CLASSIC HORROR STRETCHES
THE LIMITS OF ANIMATION

FILMING "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE"

BILLY ZANE AS "THE PHANTOM"

FOX TV REVAMPS "DR. WHO"

MONSTER MOVIE "THE RELIC"

"THE CRAFT," TEEN WITCHERY



Volume 27 Number 10

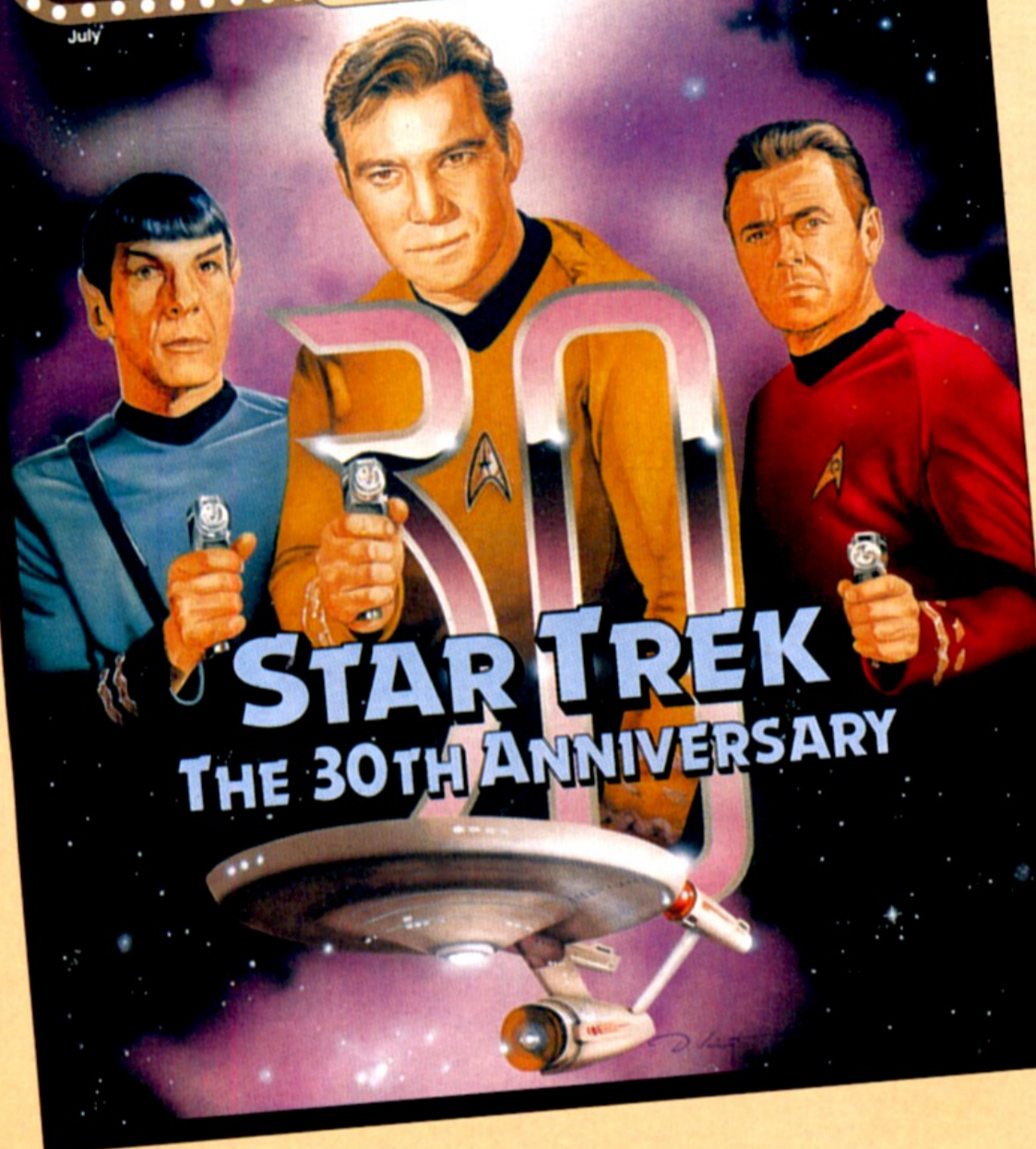


CINEFANTASTIQUE

SPECIAL DOUBLE-ISSUE

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July



STAR TREK THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY

THE REVIEW OF HORROR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION FILMS GOES MONTHLY

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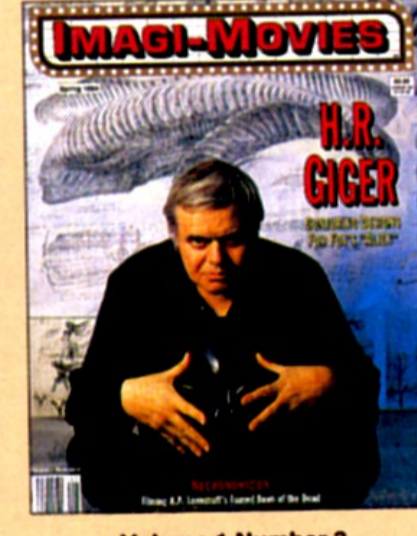
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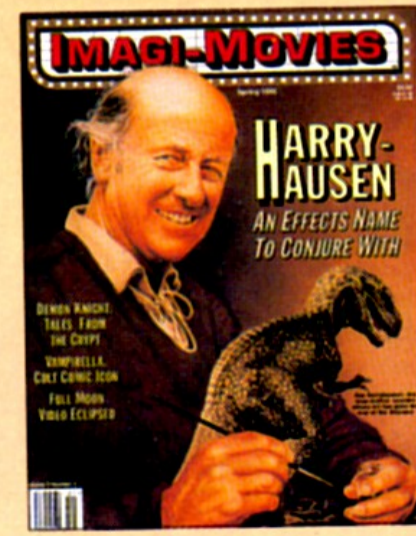
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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

JUNE 1995

As has become the case in recent years, many of this summer's anticipated blockbusters are genre related: *THE PHANTOM*, *DRAGONHEART*, *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*, *INDEPENDENCE DAY*. Of course, one almost guaranteed success is Disney's *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, due out June 21. The studio has earned so much respect with its animated musicals that it can take unexpected chances (a historical romance last year, a Victor Hugo novel this year) and still please audiences *and* critics.

Unfortunately, they're about the only ones to have earned this kind of critical respect for genre-related material. Although it's nice to see *cinéfantastique* accounting for so much summer business, it's discouraging to note that these films are still not taken seriously. Say the words "summer blockbuster," and almost inevitably the adjective "mindless" is implied. Genre films that open during the Oscar-friendly Christmas season are still a rarity, and even the few exceptions (e.g. *TWELVE MONKEYS*) are mostly ignored by mainstream critics and Academy voters. We can't expect only rave reviews, but we have to wonder why such films are assigned not to lead critics but to second stringers whose reviews are then buried in the back pages—as if such films are somehow beneath the consideration of top critics.

This last musing is brought on by the Critics Choice poll in the April "Oscar Party" issue of *Premiere* magazine (in which I participated). I was disappointed to see how many of my colleagues favored decent but unexceptional fare like *PERSUASION* at the expense of genre films. Okay, everyone's entitled to an opinion, but there's something inherently unfair about a poll that ignores genre titles (some like *SECRET OF ROAN INISH* weren't even listed, so you couldn't recommend them even if you wanted to). This kind of stacking the odds (even if unintentional) discourages recognition of the genre. Still, if the mainstream press won't acknowledge the quality of these films, we certainly will continue to do so.

Steve Biodrowski



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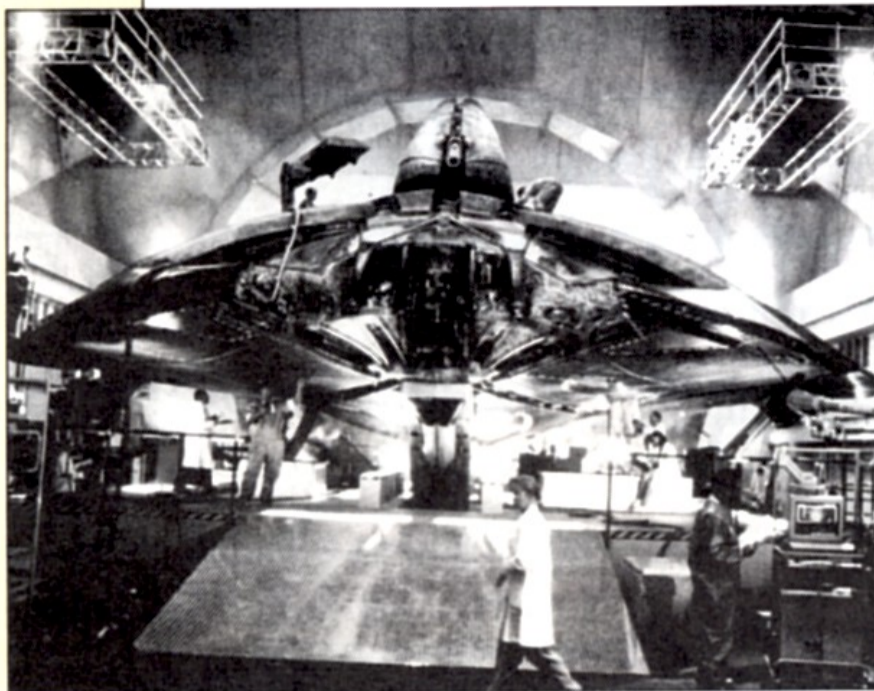
CINEFANTASTIQUE (ISSN 0145-6032) is published monthly at 7240 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park, IL 60130. (708) 366-5566. Second class postage paid at Forest Park, IL 60130 & additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to CINEFANTASTIQUE, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park, IL 60303. **Subscriptions:** 12 Issues \$48, 18 issues \$69, 24 Issues \$90. (*Foreign & Canada:* 12 Issues \$55, 18 issues \$80, 24 Issues \$100.) Single copies: \$8. **Retail Distribution:** In the U.S. by Eastern News Distributors, 250 W. 55th St., New York, NY 10019. (800) 221-3148. In Great Britain by Titan Distributors, P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT. Phone: (01)980-6167. **Submissions** of artwork and articles are encouraged, but must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Contents copyright ©1996 by Frederick S. Clarke. CINEFANTASTIQUE ® is a Registered U.S. Trademark. **PRINTED IN USA.**

EAGERLY AWAITED

INDEPENDENCE DAY (Fox)

STARSHIP TROOPERS is in development; MARS ATTACKS is in production; a veritable armada of alien films is set to invade the nation's motion picture screens. But first comes INDEPENDENCE DAY. Is director Roland Emmerich relieved that his film will be the one to strike first? "You know, I was never so worried about it," he claimed. "If there's a whole crop of movies coming, then it starts to hurt, but I would say this summer is perfect for movies like that, because there are like only one or two. Next year, there are too many. It's like, 'how many science fiction movies can you do in one summer!'" The film promises devastation on a scale never before attempted on the screen. Said producer Dean Devlin: "You'll see Los Angeles when this happens; you'll see New York City and Washington, D.C. And it's really some of the most phenomenal images I've ever seen. Our effects people have just totally outdone themselves."

July 5



RELEASE SCHEDULE

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Jay Stevenson
(unless otherwise noted)

THE ARRIVAL (Orion)

May 31

Beleaguered Orion gets back into theatrical distribution with this negative pick up, the directorial debut from scripter David Twohy (WATERWORLD). Charlie Sheen stars as a renegade scientist who probes the origin of radio waves from outer space and stumbles onto the seeds of a worldwide alien invasion. Ron Silver (TIME COP) and Lindsay Crouse co-star. (Formerly titled SHOCKWAVE.) SEE PAGE 38.

BARB WIRE (Gramercy) Now playing

"I hope this year is going to be important for me, because of two totally different movies like BARB WIRE and PINOCCHIO," said veteran actor Udo Keir (ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN). Of BARB WIRE, he said, "It's science fiction from a comic book, directed by David Hogan. Pamela Anderson [Lee] plays Barb Wire, and I play her right-hand man. She's more than a superhero; she's like Barbarella and RuPaul all in one. She's a beautiful woman, and I think she's very funny. She has this quality like Marilyn Monroe. Of course, she is different, too. It's like the next generation."

THE CRAFT (Columbia)

May 10

Rachel True, who plays one of a quartet of school girls dabbling in witchcraft, thinks the producers of this film were interested in making it truthful: "You're going to bend some stuff—it's a Hollywood movie—but, at the same time, having [Wiccan priestess] Pat Devin there was really great on their part. A lot of the chants are true, which was a little freaky to me at certain points, because you think, 'Well, I'm not really into this, but I am conjuring up something here.' I think some Wiccan groups are going to be thrilled this film is being made, and some not." **Douglas Eby**

THE HAUNTED WORLD OF EDWARD D. WOOD JR. (Wood-Thomas)

May 1

The world premiere of this documentary, directed by Brett Thompson, takes place at the Nuart Theatre in Los Angeles, paired with a previously lost Ed Wood short, CROSSROADS OF LAREDO. The usual suspects—Maila "Vampira" Nurmi, Paul Marco, Dolores Fuller—show up in new interviews and in clips from Wood's films. The film also contains previously unseen material, including some from the archives of Bela Lugosi, Jr.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (Paramount)

May 24

Early buzz had this Tom Cruise vehicle on a fall 1995 schedule, its delay allegedly due to a crowded action film line-up (GOLDENEYE, MONEY TRAIN). Not so, says scripter David Koepp: "It really wasn't ever pushed back. They sort of did lip service to wanting to come out by the end of the year. It was always scheduled to finish shooting in August. And there are a lot of optical effects—a lot of ILM stuff. To try to get all that computer stuff done in time for a November release, I think, was never really a very realistic goal. So it wasn't pushed back for any problem. In fact, most of the people involved always thought it would make a much better summer film." SEE PAGE 6. **Matthew F. Saunders**

THE PHANTOM (Paramount)

June 7

Considering the poor hit-and-miss ratio of Hollywood's comic book adaptations (THE SHADOW, DICK TRACY), scripter Jeffrey Boam was especially concerned with what he termed "the problem of tone" when it came to adapting Lee Falk's venerable hero to the big screen. "Was it campy? Was it Jokey? Is it straight?" he said of searching for an appropriate approach. "I found one. I don't know what label you put on it, but it's consistent and works in the movie. There's a lot of humor. I don't make fun of the Phantom, of the costume, of the history. I try to take all of that seriously, but there's humor between the characters." SEE PAGE 8. **Dan Scapperotti**

THINNER (Paramount)

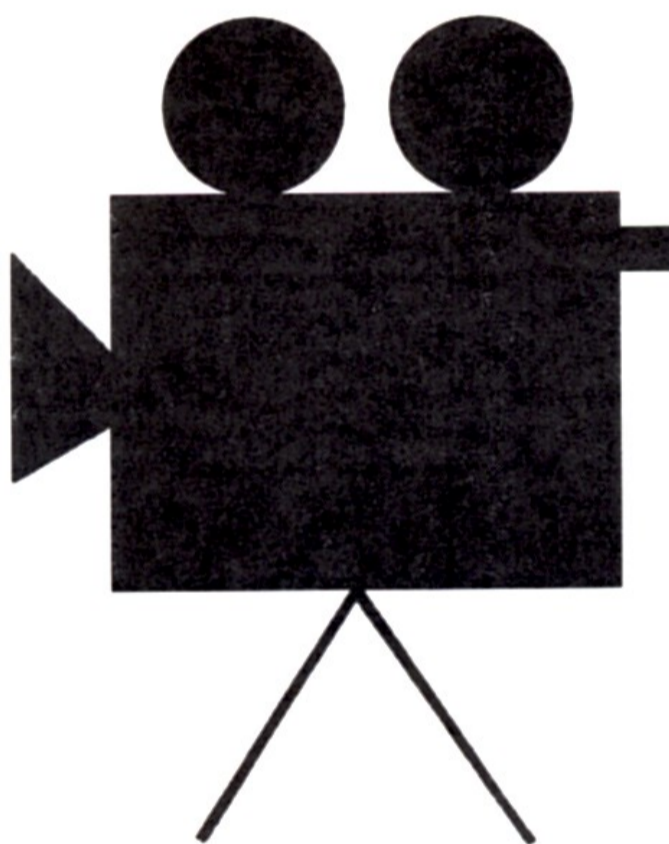
May 3

Director Tom Holland's adaptation of Stephen King's "Bachman" book, scripted by Michael McDowell, went through a post-production weight gain, with new make-up effects added to beef up the ending. SEE CFQ 27:8.

TWISTER (Universal)

May 17

Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton star as scientists leading a team investigating a dangerous storm system. Michael Crichton (who co-scripted with his wife) takes the chaos theory explored in JURASSIC PARK (which, more in novel than film, emphasized humanity's inability to predict complex systems like the weather) and applies it to tornadoes. Although no supernatural elements are involved, and the science can't really be called fiction, the killer tornado functions as the equivalent of a monster, striking down innocent victims with the same arbitrariness as the shark in JAWS. With helpless human cowering in the cellar while the colossal force outside threatens to topple their houses, it looks as if director Jan DeBont managed to take any ideas left over from his aborted tenure with TriStar's GODZILLA and put them to use here. SEE PAGE 6.



DRAGONHEART (Universal)

"It has an overtone of Arthurian myth," said screenwriter Charles Edward Pogue (PSYCHO III). "Not that it deals with the Round Table, but this knight (Dennis Quaid) is the last of that chivalrous sort that King Arthur typified. It's set in the 10th Century, but it's sort of a neverland, not a hard and fast 10th Century." The story focuses on a unique relationship between the knight and a CGI dragon (voiced by Sean Connery), who rediscover their lost idealism. "At first they become reluctant champions, and then they realize that they are the only hope of an oppressed people against an evil king, and in so doing they find that spirit they once had," said Pogue, adding, "Our dragon is a very fantastic creature who actually at one time was a friend to mankind, but since they parted company over the years they have become shunned creatures who started to embody evil. We accept this is a fantasy and the dragon talks like everybody else; if we have done our job right, he will be a real character, and you will get emotionally involved in his story and feelings." SEE CFQ 27:9. **James Van Hise**



May 31

HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC

FUTURE GENERATIONS

Next TREK shrouded in secrecy.

by Sue Uram

Planned for a Christmas '96 release STAR TREK VIII is very tentatively titled FUTURE GENERATIONS. According to producer Rick Berman, this is only the working title, which may be changed. Of course, the *Enterprise NCC 1701 E* will be introduced to replace the *Enterprise D*, which was destroyed in STAR TREK—GENERATIONS. Berman confirms that the Borg will be involved, and the beginnings of Starfleet will be explored in this new saga. Although he adds that all "insider" information out so far is rumor, it's a safe bet the script by Brannon Braga and Ronald Moore will involve time travel, which lends itself nicely to the re-emergence of Classic Trek crew members. Jonathan Frakes, who helmed episodes of NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE 9, and VOYAGER, will make his feature directing debut and continue his role as Riker.

Perhaps the most interesting rumor is that H.R. Giger has been approached to design the Borg mother, which is apparently intended to resemble one of his "Li" paintings from *Necronomicon*. Hiring the Swiss surrealist only makes sense, since the biomechanical look of the Borg was obviously inspired by his work.

No confirmation has been made on which other ST:TNG cast members have signed on, but Paramount is confident that STAR TREK VIII will have the entire cast. Neither Patrick Stewart nor Brent Spiner have signed for more TREK films, and Spiner has expressed doubt as to whether he is aging too much to continue his role as an android. Stewart (currently divorcing his wife and seeing Merri D. Howard, the line producer for both ST:TNG and VOYAGER) is attempting to break the type-casting of Captain Jean Luc Picard: he played a gay man in the movie JEFFREY last year and will appear in another movie, titled LET IT BE ME, in 1996. However, *Hollywood Reporter* indicated that the two actors had lobbied for Frakes as director, and since when do studios take input from actors who aren't



Jonathan Frakes (r) takes the helm of STAR TREK: FUTURE GENERATIONS, which will pit the *Enterprise* against NEXT GENERATION nemesis the Borg.

going to be in the film?

With regards to the other cast members, Michael Dorn has moved on to co-star in the DEEP SPACE 9 TV series, and has appeared in the new OUTER LIMITS show. After narrating the questionable hoax television program, ALIEN AUTOPSY, Frakes is gearing up to appear as his transporter duplicated brother, Tom, in a STAR TREK: VOYAGER episode which he will direct this season. He will also star in a new series on ABC, BROTHERS OF THE FRONTIER, which is slated for release later this year.

LeVar Burton continues to direct and star in his READING RAINBOW television series, while Marina Sirtis' only post-GENERATIONS

genre appearance has been as a voice on GARGOYLES.

With regards to Majel Barrett Roddenberry, Berman confirms that her character, Lwaxanna Troi, will not die in the next movie. However, he does not confirm that her character will even be in the movie to begin with. No word is out as to the budget or the production time frame.

Rumors and innuendo notwithstanding, the outlook for the movie currently titled STAR TREK VIII: FUTURE GENERATIONS seems a sure bet to be seen in 1997. That is, as Gene Roddenberry once said, as long as STAR TREK ventures continue to "pay the light bill" at Paramount. □

Short Notes

E.R. actor **George Clooney** (FROM DUSK TILL DAWN) has signed a multi-million-dollar deal with Warner Bros, which includes being fitted for his bat-suit, since Val Kilmer seems reluctant to reprise the role for BATMAN AND ROBIN. Other actors on board include Chris O'Donnell as Robin, Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy, and Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl. ☺ Kilmer, meanwhile has reversed his earlier decision not to play the lead in THE SAINT. Opposite him will be Elizabeth Shue, hot off her appearance in LEAVING LAS VEGAS. Philip Noyce (CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER) will direct. ☺ The excellent GAMERA, GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE will not be going direct-to-video after all—a fate it hardly deserved. A deal has been made to release the film on tape, but it seems that the contract stipulated that the film would have to receive at least platform theatrical distribution first, which will happen in select cities in September. □

THE FUTURE OF DISNEY

by Mike Lyons

For anyone wondering how Disney plans to continue their winning streak, the studio gave answers on February 22 at a press event held in Manhattan's Walter Reade Theatre. Disney not only provided glimpses of JAMES & THE GIANT PEACH, HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, and the live-action 101 DALMATIANS; Thomas Schumaker, senior vice president of Walt Disney Pictures, also gave the audience a sneak peek at the upcoming slate of animated films, by means of a slide presentation.

First up was TARZAN. Early conceptual artwork for the animated feature revealed that Disney will be emphasizing Edgar Rice Burroughs' original vision, expressed in *Tarzan of the Apes*: the story of a young boy raised in the wild by apes, who eventually searches for his human heritage. Phil Collins will provide songs for the film.

Next up was FANTASIA CONTINUED, the long promised follow-up to the 1940 classic. Walt Disney envisioned FANTASIA as a concert of sorts, returning every few years, with older scenes deleted and newer segments replacing them—a concept that was abandoned when the film failed to perform up to box office expectations in its initial release. The new generation of animators has revived the idea. Schumaker showed artwork from one of the new segments, set to the score of *The Pines of Rome*, which would be used as a backdrop for a whale ballet, of sorts.

Two experiments in animation were then revealed. The first was BUGS, the next joint venture from Disney and Pixar. Another all-computer-animated feature, this is a kind of re-telling of the "Grasshopper and the Ants" fable, which promises to do for the insects what TOY STORY did for toys. Shumaker then discussed another non-traditional animated film, DINOSAUR. The prehistoric tale, still in the early days of production, will be another landmark, employing stop-motion, CGI, and miniature models.

In a more traditional vein will be THE LEGEND OF MULAN, a story that seems better suited for Akira Kurosawa than Disney. The film is set in 15th century China, at a time

continued on next page

TWISTER

Abandoning GODZILLA, director Jan DeBont speeds into tornadoes.

by Steve Biodrowski

"Just a week after GODZILLA fell through for budget reasons, I read the script of TWISTER," said director Jan DeBont, recalling his move from TriStar's mega-budget behemoth to Warner's weather thriller. "I had a similar experience with SPEED: I instantly could see what to do with the movie. I think that's important, the first impression of a screenplay. It doesn't matter whether it's finalized or not but whether you see the final version of an incredible movie. I could see all the scenes right away. It's one of those things: men against nature—it's very classical. It's not about violence; it's not about killing people. There's nothing more beautiful, more powerful, more destructive, more magical, more creative than nature. To put that in a movie is fantastic—which of course is hard, because you could never of course put actors in front of a tornado—you'd kill them."

DeBont's big challenge was visualizing the film's tornadoes. "Until then, I only had seen tornadoes like everybody else—on TV, basically, on the news. Mostly, they're not very good: you see a glimpse and some debris through a very shaky camera. Then I started collecting hundreds of hours of tape from storm chasers. You totally get addicted to it. Those storm chasers themselves are addicted to just that: they take three months off every year; they have a car full of very sophisticated equipment; and they chase tornadoes. It's like try-



Above: Jan DeBont directs Helen Hunt. Inset: Hunt and Bill Paxton play scientists studying deadly tornadoes.

ing to catch the biggest wave in surfing: it's totally dangerous; it can kill you; but you have to do it. They have conventions and show their videos: 'Look at this! I almost got killed!' They get so excited. You listen to those tapes: they're always very calm when they start, and then the adrenalin level skyrockets. It is that great and it is that magical, because it's awe-inspiring and incredibly unique to look at those things—you can't take your eyes away."

The original script was written by Michael Crichton with his wife. "He's been very much involved," said DeBont. "I worked with him for awhile. Then he had to finish *The*



Lost World, and Joss Whedon wrote for awhile on it, and Jeff Davison, who was mostly on the set with me. Michael was involved again at the end, when he'd finished his book. He loved the project. It's something he always had in mind to write. He had been trying to make scripts about it for a long time, and it never really worked because he never had a great story. If you don't have a great story, then you have no movie; we have a really good story—very emotional, very satisfying, but most of all very exciting."

The trick was sustaining a story that focuses on an impersonal phenomenon, which the film achieved "by giving the tornado character," according to DeBont. "Tornadoes change all the time: the look of a tornado lasts three or four seconds; then it changes. That makes it incredible to watch. This team of scientists is trying to create a better warning system. Right now, the warning is almost nothing—it's all based on somebody actually seeing a tornado. Those scientists are

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Obituaries

by Mike Lyons

Jerry Siegel

Superman didn't actually hail from the planet Krypton; he came from the mind of writer Jerry Siegel. Siegel, the co-creator of the "Man of Steel," died on January 28 of heart failure. He was 81.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Siegel and fellow classmate, Joseph Shuster, came up with the idea for Superman when they were both high school students. Four years later, they sold the idea to National Allied Periodicals (later DC Comics), and in June of 1938, the world's first superhero made his debut in that month's issue of Action Comics. Disguised as mild-mannered Clark Kent and surrounded by a great supporting cast of characters that included Lois Lane (whom Siegel actually modeled after his wife, Joanna) and a slew of arch-enemies, Superman soon sped "faster than a speeding bullet" past general popularity and into the realm of cultural icon. The character would go on to triumph in various other media, satisfying generation after generation. From Max Fleischer's animated shorts of the '30s, to the '50s TV series, and from 1978's SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE to today's LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, there hasn't been a time when the character wasn't around.

In a press release, Mike Carlin, executive editor of DC Universe, said, "Jerry Siegel—like his creation, Superman—will always remain first and foremost in the world of comic books. His legacy will live on in the hearts and deeds of writers, artists, and above all readers as the Man of Steel's never-ending battle rages on." □

THE FUTURE OF DISNEY

continued from previous page/ When the Emperor is calling upon villagers to fight Mongol invaders. A young farm girl intercepts a draft notice meant for her father and decides to go in his place.

Finally, there was next year's HERCULES. Schumaker not only showed slides of the major characters but also treated the audience to a work-in-progress scene. The musical number, entitled "Zero to Hero," was shown in storyboard form, with the song playing over the drawings. Even from this, it was evident that directors Ron Clements and John Musker were employing the same breakneck MTV-style that they used in ALADDIN. HERCULES will actually look at the idea of dealing with fame, as the title character tries to accept his new-found popularity. Danny Devito and James Woods are among the voice talent.

Other possible films on the horizon include another animal saga, a big-screen action-adventure yarn, and (a first for Disney) an animated science-fiction epic. All of this should keep animation buffs looking forward to the years ahead. □

Production Starts

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Bruce Willis follows 12 MONKEYS with another science-fiction effort. Gary Oldman and Ian Holm co-star for writer-director Luc Besson, whose American debut, THE PROFESSIONAL, became something of a sleeper hit a couple years ago.

HAMLET

Hey, if it's got a ghost, it's genre! Kenneth Branagh, who's tended to botch his outright genre efforts (DEAD AGAIN) returns to what he knows best, adapting Shakespeare to the screen. Branagh promises his script will feature the entire text, often truncated in past adaptations (i.e., the recent Mel Gibson version, directed by Franco Zeffirelli).



THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS

Eric Draven rests in peace, but the crow flies on in this futuristic sequel.

*by Frederick C. Szebin,
with Steve Biodrowski*

August will see the release of **THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS**. This time, the story follows Ashe (Vincent Perez) a mechanic with a special bond with his son, Danny—until their happy world is obliterated by Judah (Richard Brooks), who ties father and son together and throws them into a river. The mystic Crow carries Ashe's soul back to the land of the living to seek revenge.

Unlike Eric Draven (played by the late Brandon Lee in **THE CROW**), who wanted only to complete his mission and return to the grave so that he could be reunited with his lost love, the twist in this story is that Ashe falls in love with Sarah, the only returning character from the first film, now seven years older and played by Mia Kirshner. (Despite the fact that only two years have elapsed between films, this one is intentionally set sometime in the future.) The love between Ashe and Sarah is against whatever laws control the Crow, and therein lies the film's dramatic tension.

"There's a very interesting dilemma," said producer Jeff Most, who returns from the original. "On one side, Ashe is given the chance to come back and right the wrongs. That is his job, the only thing that he's really permitted to do. Yet he wishes to be with this woman, to care for her and protect her. It places him at odds with returning to the land of the dead and being with his son. It's an emotional struggle and a physical one as well, because by virtue of the fact that he's denying himself the ability to return to the grave—other than the fact that he's break-

ing the laws—he has doomed himself to a very different physical presence."

Perez, probably best known to U.S. audiences for his appearance opposite Isabelle Adjani in **QUEEN MARGOT**, was chosen from 200 hopeful applicants for the role. The actor very seriously calls his interpretation of the new character "a mixture of Jim Morrison and Hamlet." He added, "I'm doing **THE CROW** because of Tim Pope [executive producer], Ed Pressman, and because I really love the team. When I saw the first **CROW**, I thought the subject was very interesting, but I think it lacked drama. When you read the comic book, you have less action. You have the drama: you have to face death, and you have to think. The first film was more into Poe, in a way. This movie is a mixture of action and drama, which is great.

"What I love about this movie is the wonderful energy," he continued. "When a director is trusting people, the energy is wonderful. This is going to be quite an

Top left: Vincent Perez as Ashe, the new protagonist revived by the Crow. Top right: before his murder, Ashe shares a quiet moment with his son.

amazing movie. I'm proud of it. I think this movie is going to be a piece of art."

Lofty praise, indeed. Still, with the tragedy of the first **CROW** indelibly imprinted on the audience's minds, one might wonder why **CITY OF ANGELS** should even have been made. "Because everyone said it couldn't be done for the obvious reason," responded director Tim Pope. "I believe there was another story to be told. I think our movie is a lot more about the paradox of what has happened to the main character: What if it happened to you? What if you woke up and discovered you were dead?"

"I've heard people use the word 'franchise' with this movie. It's not like **BATMAN**. The first **CROW** provided us with the chance to take much bigger risks, and that's what we're doing. We're being chancy with everything—in terms of story, shots, character development, and the areas we are exploring. I feel we're going to be more inside the main character. The film is going to have a vibrancy to it. I feel the last film was about death, whereas **CITY OF ANGELS** is about life within death." □

THE PHANTOM

“The Ghost Who Walks” walks again, this summer.

By Dan Scapperotti

Far in the interior of the Bangalla jungle lie the Deep Woods and the mysterious Skull Cave, lair of the Phantom—the Ghost Who Walks, the heroic masked figure who rides a white horse and battles the ever present forces of evil. Created in 1936 by Lee Falk, whose vivid imagination was also responsible for the most renowned of fictional magicians, Mandrake, the Phantom still appears in comic strips and comics all

over the world. Strangely, America, the country that introduced the Phantom, seems to have forgotten the one-time comic strip sensation. That’s about to change.

On June 7, Paramount is set to unleash the Ghost Who Walks on a new generation. Billy Zane (TALES FROM THE CRYPT: DEMON KNIGHT) plays the Phantom, and Kristy Swanson (BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER) is Diana Palmer. Also in the cast are Treat Williams, as the Phantom’s adversary, Samantha Eggar, and Patrick McGeehan (THE PRISONER).

It has been three years since Jeffrey Boam (INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE) got the script assignment, and Paramount could hardly have picked a writer with a better grasp of how to deliver the character to a contemporary audience. The film was to go before the cameras with Joe Dante directing and Cameron Diaz cast as Diana Palmer. Then THE SHADOW hit screens with a thud heard throughout Hollywood, and THE PHANTOM’s fate was sealed—though only temporarily. The new script is close to the one Boam wrote for Dante, except for a few modifications requested by Simon Wincer, the new director.

Wisely, Boam has set his tale in 1938 and hasn’t strayed too far from the Phantom’s comic origins. Most of the Phantom’s traditional territory has found its way onto the screen: the dynamic Skull Cave, as well as the entire Bangalla jungle, the gold-studded paradise of Keela-Wee Beach and the fabulous waterfall through which the Phantom rides without getting wet, and



The movie opens on June 7.

Billy Zane, more often cast as a villain (e.g., DEMON KNIGHT), dons the mask and costume of the heroic “Ghost Who Walks.”



the Whispering Grove of trees that seem to speak the word “Phantom” when the wind blows through their branches.

“It’s a lot like the original Phantom comics,” said Boam. “It has a lot of the same characters, the same flavor, all the period stuff: the vehicles, the pontoon planes, the submarines. The Phantom is such an interesting character; he holds to old-fashioned values like honor and integrity, loyalty, and courage. He’s sort of a gentleman in the old-fashioned sense of the word—chivalrous with women. He doesn’t kill unless he’s really forced to, because he normally can find another way to handle somebody he’s in combat with. It had to be in period, because I don’t think a lot of those ideas translate well into the present.”

The story is both a quest and a love story. Legend has it that the three skulls of Douganda, which have been separated over the last 400 years, together possess titanic powers. The skulls, made of jade, silver and gold, when brought together can harness an ancient power that can be used for evil purposes if they fall into the wrong hands. High in his New York headquarters, the villainous Drax, bent on becoming the first American dictator, learns of the skulls and sets out to find where they have been hidden for four centuries.

“Because it’s the ’30s,” said Boam, “we can play with those ideas of fascism and world domination and things like that. The



“It’s a lot like the original comics. The Phantom holds to old-fashioned values like honor and integrity, loyalty and courage.”

—Screenwriter Jeffrey Boam—

Usually confined to the jungle in the comics, the Phantom reaches New York City in Paramount’s new film.

skulls originated in the Bangalla jungle where the Phantom lives. An old nemesis of the Phantom are called the Singg pirates. Drax has henchmen, and some of these are members of the Singg Brotherhood whom he’s using to collect the skulls.”

The first skull the Drax gang steals is in the Bangalla jungle, so the Phantom is immediately at odds with these henchmen. He goes back to the Skull Cave and searches the Chronicles, the history of all the Phantoms. His research shows that the skulls of Douganda were once entrusted to the Douganda tribe. “This is the tribe that saved the young boy who became the first Phantom,” Boam explained. “So the Douganda skulls loom large in the myth of the Phantom. He feels responsible that the skull got away. His goal is to make sure that the other two are not found.”

Because the Phantoms wear the same mask and costume over the centuries, the myth arises that he is the Man Who Cannot Die, the Ghost Who Walks. In reality, the Phantom is a long line of descendants who pass down the mantle from father to son. The Phantom’s son, Kit Walker was sent to America for his education, where he met the lovely Diana Palmer and fell in love. Tragically, when his father died, he was forced to abandon her suddenly and rush back to the Deep Woods to take his place as the Phantom.

“The movie is a love story between Kit

Walker and Diana Palmer,” said Boam. “She looks just like Diana as she was drawn in the original comics. Through plot circumstances she comes to the jungle where she gets kidnapped and rescued by the Phantom. Now the Phantom recognizes her because he knows her from the days when he lived in America and was a college student. It’s been six years, and of course she

doesn’t recognize him. All those old feelings come rushing back for him. Now she falls in love with the Phantom because he’s this wonderful, mysterious, heroic character. She goes back to New York. The Phantom, on the trail of the skull, goes to New York as Kit Walker, where he meets Diana again. Now Diana is seeing Kit for the first time in six years. She has fallen in love with the Phantom; and, when Kit Walker comes back into her life, she’s torn between the same two guys—between this mysterious man of the jungle, the Phantom, and Kit Walker whom she’s loved for so many years but who broke her heart six years ago. So we have an interesting scene in New York where all those feelings come into play when the two of them team up to continue the plot.”

While retaining the characteristics of Falk’s creations, Boam had to make some modifications for the screen versions. “In the comics they’re not well fleshed out,” he said. “They’re comic strip characters. Especially with Kit, I projected, I think, a lot more humanity into that character. He’s not so much a cardboard figure. He’s a person with desires, feelings and foibles. I’ve humanized him and made him a real person.

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The film retains many comic book elements, including the white stallion and Diana Palmer (Kristy Swanson).



THE RELIC

Gale Anne Hurd and Peter Hyams team up for a multi-million dollar monster movie.

By Nancy and Bob Garcia

For *THE RELIC*, Gale Anne Hurd and Sam Mercer's production company, Pacific Western (hoping to put the disappointing *STRANGE DAYS* behind it), have brought together director Peter Hyams (*TIME COP*) with special effects master Stan Winston (*JURASSIC PARK*), and thrown in an estimated \$65 million budget, all in hopes that the film will take the summer box office by storm. Paramount studios is releasing the film.

The movie is an adaptation of Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child's 1995 moody thriller, set in the Chicago Museum of Natural History (sic). The novel tells of a mysterious creature, hiding in the museum for ten years, that suddenly goes on a killing spree when a certain artifact is taken out of storage for a new exhibit. Grad student Margo Green, a police detective, and an FBI agent must figure out what's going on and destroy the brain-eating monster.

THE RELIC follows the tradition of previous Gale Anne Hurd movies (e.g., *TREMORS*), pitting an assortment of quirky individuals against an overwhelming antagonist. Filling the strong heroine slot is Penelope Anne Miller (*THE SHADOW*) as the forceful Dr. Margo Green, a biologist at the museum who is instrumental in the creature's



Paramount's teaser trailer for the film, running in theaters since February, offers glimpses of the atmospheric production design by Philip Harrison (*OUTLAND*) but nary a hint of its starring character, Stan Winston's monster.

destruction. Tom Sizemore (*STRANGE DAYS*), plays D'Agosta, the detective investigating the ghastly string of murders. The knowledgeable, wheelchair-bound Dr. Frock (veteran actor James Whitmore) fills out the complement.

Two human obstacles stand in their path: Linda Hunt is the director of the museum, who is only interested in keeping every-

thing quiet so that the new Superstition exhibit can draw crowds and get the museum out of the red; and Chi Muoi Lo (the younger "bad" brother in Action Pack's *VANISHING SON*) plays the shady Greg Lee, a character much like Paul Reiser's corporate ghoul in *ALIENS*.

The book had great potential but major changes were necessary to translate it to the screen.

The first script by Amy Jones (*MYSTIC PIZZA*) turned Margo into a much stronger female lead, streamlined the story, rearranged or eliminated extraneous characters, and resulted in a more tightly-focused plot. John Raffo was hired to write a second draft, and even Hyams eventually took pen in hand. As the start date drew near, Amanda Silver and Rick Jaffa, who had just finished *EYE FOR*

AN EYE at Paramount, were asked to do production rewrites.

"They came to us literally eight days before shooting started, so we just jumped right in," Jaffa said. "We worked off of the John Raffo script, but we were also given different scenes from various scripts, and I can't tell you whether Amy wrote them or John or Peter Hyams. We were brought on to make sense of the whole thing and give it shape."

"Basically the structure was in place," Silver said. "Most of the changes had to do with character and relationships. Often, to make a book into a coherent movie, you have to pick and choose and do a lot of inventing in between." Added Jaffa, "There are a couple of characters who do not say and do the best thing for humanity. What we tried to do is breathe some life into them, give them shadings so they wouldn't just be stick figures."

All characters were affected by the rewrite, either altered or

"ALIEN" MEETS "JURASSIC PARK"
IN NEW YORK CITY

RELIC



DOUGLAS PRESTON
AND
LINCOLN CHILD

The script for *THE RELIC* (with the addition of a definite article in the title) was adapted from the novel by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child.

dropped from the story; even one of the main characters completely disappeared from their draft: the FBI agent was combined with the cop into a single character with a whole new personality. "Almost every single character, even minor ones, we completely recreated," said Jaffa, "except for the monster; he's got his own character going."

They worked for five weeks before and during shooting, sometimes faxing in pages to be shot the next day. Actor Chi Muoi Lo, while still filming, said, "They're rewriting as we speak. When I was in Chicago, I didn't have the script; I had not read anything. Finally, three days before I shot, they sent me some scene that I was supposed to do. I looked it over and had to come up with something. When I got back here [Los Angeles], it took another three weeks before they could send me an entire script, a new draft with the changes. But I'm happy to say that, with the changes,

it was very, very good."

This process presented certain problems. "When you tinker with a story, it has a domino effect," said Silver. "What changed in scene 2 affects scene 15, and the questions become kind of technical: where is every character in the museum, and what are they doing at each moment? Figuring that out became a big part of our job."

The writing team worked closely with Hyams. "We had a great relationship with him," Jaffa said. "He's very clear about what he wants and doesn't want, but also very collaborative and a good listener."

Chi Muoi Lo also had praise for the veteran director: "He tells you what he wants; then he lets you do whatever you want, and somewhere along the line you basically compromise. Which is really nice for actors. Compared to other directors I've worked with, it's amazing how he knows exactly what shot he wants that day."

ON-SET EFFECTS

"Even in person, the effects are completely believable," said screenwriter Rick Jaffa. "They're so real and so wonderfully done that I think people will love this movie."

To achieve the claustrophobic feel of the museum, where almost the entire movie takes place, Hyams brought in Philip Harrison, his production designer from *OUTLAND*. The key set for *THE RELIC* is Harrison's reproduction of the large hall and several rooms of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, to match scenes shot on location in the real museum. The set was needed for the grand finale when the museum's sprinkler system soaks everything.

"When I came on to this particular set, it was amazing!" Lo exclaimed. "You would think you were on location—it was that spectacular, that real. When I found out it was a \$2 million set, I said 'OK, that's why.' They really built the museum."

Lo loved playing a bad guy but saw him in a more sympathetic light: "He's just an ambitious young man who would do anything to get where he wants to go, and his ambition really messes up things. He actually lies about certain things and gets a lot of people locked up and they get killed, but he's also very funny. I think the audience will get a big kick out of him."

Director Hyams kept tight reigns on every aspect of his central character, directing Stan Winston on exactly what he needed the monster to do in every scene. "I would say Peter is probably a genius and also a control freak," said Lo. "He would tell Stan Winston what he wanted, and Stan would direct his people. It took 12 people to operate the creature."

"There are things this creature can do that you have never seen in a movie before. It's even better than *JURASSIC PARK*. It's ferocious and scary. When you look at it, you see an almost human face in it, but it is really a powerfully strong lizard. It looked more real to me than the stuffed animals in the museum."

Amanda Silver and Rick Jaffa agreed about the monster: "Even in person, the effects are completely believable," Rick said. "They're so real and so wonderfully done that I think people are really going to love this movie." (Winston's on-set effects will be supplemented by over 100 CGI shots from *VIFX [FROM DUSK TILL DAWN]* in post-production).

Lo hopes to shine in his first major role in a feature, but he understands what audiences will be paying to see. "The creature is going to be what will draw people, that's why they spent \$6 million on it... In my opinion, when making this kind of movie, if you have the gimmick, which is the creature, the next thing you should worry about is the actors and the director. We have a very skillful action director and very strong cast. I think the first *ALIEN* was good because Sigourney Weaver didn't let the creature upstage her, which is very important." He concludes with a laugh, "If you're not a good actor, the creature can easily take the scene away from you." □

Chi Muoi Lo, who plays Greg Lee, claims Stan Winston's creature "can do things you've never seen before."



THE CRAFT

Empowerment via witchcraft, from the producer of WOLF.

By Douglas Eby

According to the Internet web site of the international organization Covenant of the Goddess, Wicca or Witchcraft is "an earth religion in which groups of women and men meet to raise energy and put themselves in tune with natural forces and honor the old goddesses and gods." One of the central pursuits is magic: "an art which requires adherence to certain principles, and a conscious direction of will toward the desired end." In Columbia's supernatural thriller *THE CRAFT*, the desired ends of three high school girls dabbling in magic include getting better test grades and making the right boy pay attention. But they are having only limited success until, adding a fourth girl to make their secret circle or coven more authentic, they start to have some real power.

The story was developed from a concept of producer Doug Wick, who had some previous experience with the occult in film: "When I was working on *WOLF*, I started to think a lot about the supernatural genres, and why I was attracted to them. Most of my interest is relatively character-based, and there is a reason some stories

keep their power, and you start to think about the supernatural in its kind of original, fancier forms, and you realize people read it and it felt true to their insides, that it was a very powerful expression of what it was like to be human. I had worked for years on the script of *WOLF* with Jim Harrison, and got the idea of girls coming into their sexual power, and much more broadly than that, finding out at that age that they have these gigantic insides, that there's all this mysterious world inside you. I love empowerment stories, so witchcraft became the

most true way to express it."

Pat Devin, a high priestess and public information officer of Covenant of the Goddess who was hired by the production company as a consultant, says she can't really make any clear judgment yet of the movie, not having seen the final cut. "To quote the director, 'This is a motion picture; it's not a documentary,'" she points out. "I did what I could from my end, keeping in mind that the movie deals

with four young women who begin to play with magic, and essentially create their own deity; they are not practicing the religion of Wicca. It's sort of 'Girls just want to have fun'—girls just want to play with magic. This is very common with young women and probably has been since there have been young women. It's like, 'If I light a red candle, will he love me?'—that kind of folk magic. Some of the practices that are shown in the movie are actually, in that sense, fairly authentic, and I created some reasonable sounding chants."

After coming up with the story idea, Wick and his production company interviewed writers for about a year, looking for one who would not script "a bad version of the movie...just sort of generic and stupid. We interviewed many male and female writers; then we found Peter Filardi [*FLATLINERS*]. He was able to bring out the depth of the characters, and Andy [Fleming] did some good work on the script, too. With Filardi's first draft we all got really excited because he was able to create vivid girls, young women.



Andrew Fleming directs Rachel True, who plays one of the original trio of would-be witches. With the addition of a fourth, their coven is complete.





Rochelle (Rachel True), Sarah (Robin Tunney), Bonnie (Neve Campbell), perform a ritual on the beach, which results in the death of a whale (above).

Right away, it felt real—the bitchiness, the competitiveness; it just felt like high school.”

In collaboration with writer Filardi, Wick says, “One of the things we wanted to do in the story was to take you out on a limb a half inch at a time, so all of a sudden, to your surprise, you’d be five feet out on a branch. Hopefully, you’d even bring in people who wouldn’t normally go along if you suddenly jumped five feet out. And when we went to get a director: we had a lot of the great special effects directors interested in doing the movie, but of all the people I spoke to, Andy Fleming was the one who came with a real gut connection with the girls, the characters.

“On the other hand, I definitely wanted to have really stunning special effect expressions of their conflict, so it wasn’t like I didn’t want it to go big; I just wanted to go big with specificity. In bad work, they just plug in a scene everyone’s seen before. There’s a very stunning final conflict between two of the girls, with an amazingly developed special effect, and hopefully we’ve earned it.

Sony ImageWorks did the effects, which start in about the end of the first act, and they build; we didn’t want wall-to-wall special effects, as if you’re in an alternate universe.”

But there are plenty of scenes to keep things dramatic, as Devin reports: “There’s that old Lovin’ Spoonful song, ‘Do You Believe in Magic in a Young Girl’s Heart’—well, in the movie they’re levitating and doing all kinds of things. Much, much more interesting than the average Wiccan circle, I might add, where people generally don’t levitate or cast balls of lightning around, or have 150,000,000 snakes in the room. Reality tends to be a little tamer. The highest drama you tend to run into in an average Wiccan circle would be like who gets the last piece of chicken at the feast.”

Wick points out that the casting was very difficult: “To get the studio to approve the movie with lesser-known actresses—it was a real negotiation. From the start, the marketing department felt they could do this film without stars, because they thought the idea was so strong. Still, there was always ‘Could you get Alicia Silverstone?’ You start off there, but she was in the middle of doing CLUELESS. We went through rounds and rounds of people. Luckily, all the girls are really strong in the movie. Also, the studio did a test screening and found that young men liked it as much as young women.

“Our heroine is a celebration of witchcraft, a celebration of people finding out they have power they didn’t know they had. It’s really a celebration of the witch’s world view. There may be some who don’t like that we have a woman who gets drunk with her power, but on the other hand, that’s part of the protagonist’s journey: to overcome all that. The story intends to be realistic, but it is also metaphoric; there’s more license in that. It is about inner power, and that relates to both men and women. There’s also a theme of being true to yourself, that if you can find your own rudder you can make it work; you’ll probably be okay.”

Devin responded positively to the film’s tone and intention:

Now a complete coven, whose spells are actually starting to work, Bonnie, Nancy, and Sarah use their newly discovered powers to levitate Rochelle.



“One of the things that moved me about the script was that a number of young women do become involved with magic in a search for a sense of control or power in their life. When I was 16, I was reading Sybil Leek—this was back in the ’60s—and experimenting, so it’s not just this generation. Young women have, I think, a particular propensity, especially for charms to attract the love of their life.”

Rachel True (EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE) plays Rochelle, one of the original trio of would-be witches, along with Nancy (Fairuza Balk, RETURN TO OZ) and Bonnie (Neve Campbell, THE DARK). They are joined by Sarah (Robin Tunney, ENCINO MAN) to complete the four members needed in a coven to represent the cardinal directions and primary elements air, earth, fire and water. True says of the group: “They’re just into gaining their power, so they start off doing little chants. Their friendship strengthens as their power grows, but we know what happens when people are corrupted by power, right? To me, that’s the lesson in the film. We’re talking about four girls who don’t have any power in school—they are the misfits, the outcasts that everyone makes fun of and nobody wants to talk to. So in the beginning it is them just trying to say to the world, ‘Hey, I’m here, and I’m okay,’ and nobody listens, so they take it 10 steps further.” □

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

Screenwriter David Koepp discusses expanding the TV show for the big screen.

By Matthew F. Saunders

David Koepp (*JURASSIC PARK* and *THE SHADOW*) returns to the world of cinematic adaptations this summer with Paramount's TV show-inspired *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE*. Koepp shares screenwriting credit with Robert Towne and story credit with Steve Zaillian. Brian DePalma directed, with Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner producing. ILM provides the special effects. Also appearing are Ving Rhames, John Renou, Emmanuel Beart and Vanessa Redgrave. Jon Voight plays the only returning character, portrayed by Peter Graves in the series. "Jim Phelps returns," said Koepp. "He was the head of the IMF force. All the rest are new characters." In addition, according to Koepp, the movie features no cameos from original actors.

"Movies are different from TV shows, so we had to do different things," Koepp explained. "But we certainly still kept the fun and spirit of the show, while trying to update it, because the world of espionage is a little different now than it was then. And movie audiences are more demanding of realism than TV audiences are. So we definitely kept the team concept and also the heist concept of the show, the idea of pulling off a heist.

"The show was always about pulling the rug out from under somebody. And it was about this group of individuals who organized themselves and each had a specific skill. And that skill tied into some critical element of the plan. And the plan was carried off to pull a sting on somebody. And that's what was so fun about it: trying to keep up with their plan, maybe trying to think ahead



David Koepp's previous genre credits include *JURASSIC PARK* (with Michael Crichton), *DEATH BECOMES HER* (with Martin Donovan), and *THE SHADOW*. He recently turned to directing with *THE TRIGGER EFFECT* (above).

and see where they were going. We tried to keep that spirit of fun, those kind of reversals and twists, and that kind of caper."

Still, Koepp hopes the film will be viewed seriously, with the humor evolving naturally from the story and characters. "That's certainly our hope," he said. "We tried to make it a little more serious. The

stakes are really grave. It's not quite as broad as *TRUE LIES*."

Though reluctant to give away the story, Koepp admits being influenced by recent events. "Aldrich Ames [the CIA traitor who was feeding information to the Soviets] was very much in the news around the time this story was being conceived, and that certainly influenced us."

Koepp denies a return to the show's old Cold War metaphors, however. "I don't think there's really any shortage of bad guys in the world. And you know, while definitely being in the middle of the Cold War, they never on the show made them Russian. It was always some unnamed republic. They went to their Eastern European location, somewhere in Azusa or somewhere in the San Fernando valley, [and] they wouldn't even use a foreign language. Instead of saying gas, they'd say 'gaz' with an umlaut or something, which I thought was kind of funny. But we do name countries, because I don't think you can quite get away with that today. At the end of the Cold War we had to look elsewhere for villains [and] for that kind of metaphor, and I think we found something that's a little more '90s."

Koepp has a great deal of praise for partners DePalma and Cruise, and cites the chance to work with DePalma again as his main attraction for working on the film. "He and I had worked together on *CARLITO'S WAY* and I thought he did a great job with it," Koepp enthused. "We had a really good working relationship. He had worked out a storyline [for *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE*] with Steve Zaillian, but Zaillian was unavailable to write it because he had other commitments. Brian asked if I



Above: Tom Cruise simulates zero gravity (note harness). Below: Cruise confronts Emmanuelle Beart (DATE WITH AN ANGEL). Of Cruise, Koepp said, "He has a great attention to character detail, which is terrific. He really has great instincts as to what his character would and would not do under certain circumstances."

would work on the story with him and then write the screenplay, and I said absolutely.

"He just has an incredible ability to tell stories with pictures. And that's what film-making is all about. He has an amazing eye. He can convey something that might take you a page of dialogue or a page and a half of descriptions with just a few images. That's really exciting to work with as a writer because, with someone who has directing aspirations as I do, you learn a tremendous amount, because his visual vocabulary is so extensive."

Koepp has equal praise for Cruise: "He has a great attention to character detail, which is terrific. He really has great instincts as to what his and other characters would and would not do in certain circumstances. Everybody's got a little inner voice they listen to that guides them, and his is really finely attuned. He's got great actor instincts, and he knows how to help apply them to the movie. [He] had a lot of strong ideas and was involved from the time of the first draft on. Most producers lay back when you're making up the story, other than [to give] general guidelines here and there. But, from the time I finished my first draft, he was very involved in all the revisions." □



THE HUNCHBACK

Victor Hugo's oft-filmed classic gets the animated musical treatment from Disney.

A stunning new four-level Animation Building has been erected on the Disney lot, featuring a cone-shaped tower designed to resemble the star-be-decked hat Mickey Mouse wore as the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Inside, work moves forward on a host of projects, including the newest feature film from the animation division: **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**, based on Victor Hugo's classic tale. The novel, written in 1831, was originally titled simply *Notre Dame de Paris*, but late in the 19th century the most memorable character was elevated to the title treatment when it became *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Hugo was a leader in the French Romantic movement in the early 19th century. His most famous novel is set in medieval Paris, which seems to sit in the shadow of the great Cathedral of Notre Dame. The Archdeacon, Claude Frollo, is a sanctimonious man who harbors an unhealthy hatred for the Gypsy people, believing they are evil incarnate. Frollo also sits on the Ministry of Justice as a judge. Years before, Frollo had found a malformed child abandoned near the font of the church. He raised the boy (who is named after a medieval holiday, Quasimodo Sunday) within the confines of the bell tower, a high spire that seems to reach towards the heavens. For reasons of his own, Frollo has protected the hideous Quasimodo from the cruel world in the streets far below. When the hunchbacked



Disney's animation building, where the new **HUNCHBACK** was created, is modeled after the Sorcerer's hat in **FANTASIA**.

bell ringer, deafened by years near the thunderous bells, finally wanders into the streets, his fate is sealed.

The poet Gringoire is walking the dark streets one night when he sees two men try to kidnap a beautiful Gypsy girl, Esmeralda. The pair are routed by Phoebus, the Captain of the Guards, but not before Gringoire recognizes them as Quasimodo and Frollo.

Soon, Gringoire and Quasimodo are in love with Esmeral-

da. Frollo, too, is captivated by the young Gypsy, but he is so torn between his love for the girl and a lifetime of hatred for the Gypsies that it seems to him that his very soul is at stake.

When Esmeralda, accused of using witchcraft to kill Phoebus, is condemned to death, Quasimodo rescues her and proclaims sanctuary in the Cathedral.

The medieval world of France was so corrupt and unjust that areas were actually set aside as sanctuaries for pro-

claimed criminals, inviolate except by order of the Ministry of Justice. If the accused could reach one of these areas, sometimes entire towns, then he was, theoretically, beyond the reach of the law. The law became a deadly game, wherein the stakes were often life or death.

The major set pieces of Hugo's novel are the lavish Festival of Fools and the massive storming of the Cathedral. Here, Quasimodo fends off the attackers to protect Esmeralda, leaving hundreds dying in the streets below. Not a pretty sight for the animators at the world's most renowned studio.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

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Before and after: top, Quasimodo sings for joy in Disney's musical version of **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**; bottom, the Gypsy Esmeralda moves to help him after his lashing.





The vast setting of medieval Paris was a new challenge for the animators. Inset: Frollo confronts Quasimodo.



After completing *THE LION KING*, 20-year Disney veteran producer Don Hahn had immediately started on *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*. The directing reins were turned over to Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, with whom Hahn had worked on *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, the only animated feature ever nominated for a Best Picture Oscar.

Disney generally uses two directors on their feature animation projects because, according to Hahn, "These films are so big, with so many people, that

it's better as a two-headed monster. The two directors collaborate with each other and knock ideas around. Kirk Wise's forte is animation, so he can work with the animators specifically. Gary Trousdale works with special effects and layout. They both work together with color. All of us work together when it comes to editorial and story, and when we 'Sweat Box' scenes, which is our critiquing process."

Trousdale and Wise were preparing *A SONG OF THE SEA*, a story about humpbacked whales, as their next animated feature when the opportunity

came to switch projects.

"We were trying to figure out a way to sustain a whole feature about these big floating zeppelins with eyes on opposite sides of their heads," said Wise. "*HUNCHBACK* came along and sort of blew it out of the water, so to speak. A script came in and the studio wanted to put together an A Team for it."

The directors of an animated film act much like the directors for live action. Wise and Trousdale were intimately involved in every aspect of the filmmaking process, from deciding whether a character has blue or green

eyes to how loud the footsteps should be. They helped to shape the story line and cast voices that would bring the characters to life.

Starting with the storyboards they decided what expressions and what camera angles were to be used. They coached the live actors on the voice stage and then delivered the best vocal performances to the animators and explained what they wanted out of the scene.

"It's like directing two actors," said Wise. "It's not only coaching the actor giving the vocal performance; once we



It almost wouldn't be a Disney film without a pet: Pocahontas had a raccoon and a hummingbird; Esmeralda has a goat (below). Left: Quasimodo shares the cathedral view with Esmeralda (and friend).



give the scene to the animator, the animator is giving a performance as well, a physical performance. An animator's job is not to move the drawings; it's to move the audience. It's more important for the audience to believe in this character as a real being with lots of feelings and emotions and forget the fact that they're drawings. That's our constant challenge. So we concentrate a lot in the storyboard phase on what the acting is going to be and pre-visualize that in storyboards, so that the animator is pretty well armed by the time he gets to the drawing board."

The directors, usually, don't critique the animator's drawing for artistic merit, because most animators' artistry is not in question. Instead, they look at the performance: is the emotion coming across? Is the story coming across?

"We had to decide what types of characters exist in this world and what actors suggest themselves to those characters," said Wise. "This started very early, when we had our first list of characters and early drawings of the characters. Usually you start with your kind of pie-in-the-sky casting ideas where you suggest Esmeralda is a Demi Moore type. So you put Demi Moore at the top of the list thinking, 'We'll never get her, but she's a Demi Moore type.'"

"We had auditioned all these Broadway girls, and we found some really good ones," said Trousdale. "We were ready to cast when Jeffrey [Katzenberg] said, 'If you want Demi Moore, then get Demi Moore.' She came in and we pitched the role to her."

To their surprise, the actress was thrilled at the prospect of working on a Disney animated feature. "She was very excited by it," Wise recalled. "She really warmed up quickly to the character. The fact that she had three kids was also a selling point for her. In fact, when I was pitching the storyboard she had her youngest right there with her. She is a big Disney nut, with all the videos, who grew up on these movies and wanted to share that experience with her own kids. She's a big toy and doll collector, so

HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

ANIMATED VILLAINY

Kathy Zielinski's love of the macabre enlivens the wicked Claude Frollo.

By Dan Scapperotti

Frollo, the Minister of Justice, is unique in the pantheon of Disney villains. Unlike Scar or Ursula, Frollo doesn't know he's the villain. In his deranged mind, he sees himself as destined to uphold the morals of Paris, a city he sees in the throes of moral decay. He blames the Gypsies for the corruption he sees all around him. But when he falls in love with the beautiful Gypsy dancing girl, Esmeralda, his world starts to unravel.

Unique also is Kathy Zielinski, the attractive animator who designed Frollo and supervised the animation of the character. The first animator assigned to the project, Zielinski had a team of 8-10 animators working with her on the sinister Frollo. Another 10 cleanup artists pick up the work from the animators.

A native of Torrance, California, Zielinski was thinking of a medical career when a high school teacher offered a course in animation. The young student found a new love in the world of art and a new career path. She started with the Disney Studio in 1981, where she has worked as an animator on such characters as the Beggar, the Genie, and Jafar in *ALADDIN*, Ursula in *THE LITTLE MERMAID*, and Brigit in the *GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE*. So talented was Zielinski that she became a supervising animator on *RESCUERS DOWN UNDER*—the first woman supervisor since Retta Scott.

One of her first assignments



The villainous Frollo was animated by Kathy Zielinski, who found her initial inspiration for the character in the appearance of actor Hans Conried.

fit perfectly with her own nature, which has a distinct leaning toward the dark side: she worked on the witches in *THE BLACK CAULDRON*. "I've always loved the macabre and horror films," said Zielinski. "Ever since I was a kid, I loved dragons and monsters and always watched monster movies. I think *HUNCHBACK* is just great! This film, I think, is the best thing we've done here—certainly, in current days.

"The very first hook that I got for Frollo was Hans Conried," she continued. "I study a lot of different faces in movies, real life, or whatever. I do some caricatures of these faces to start developing something. Frollo's design came out of Hans Conried, based on his appearance in *THE 5,000 FINGERS OF DR T.*"

Not only does Zielinski work as an animator on the character;

she also supervises the other animators. "When supervising, I look for acting styles, to make sure that their acting is consistent with the way I'm developing Frollo. I also check their drawings as well, trying to keep everyone's styles in line with the way that I draw Frollo."

Generally, Zielinski tries to cast animators so that they have several scenes together, to maintain a continuity for the flow of action. She also looks to tap the independent strengths of each animator. "Some are stronger at action scenes," she said, "so I will cast them at the end of the film, where there is a big fight up in the bell tower. People who are stronger at acting—I will give them the meatier scenes in various sequences."

As an artist, Zielinski wants to do much of the animation herself, a luxury not afforded when she must spend time



Haunted by the memory of the seductive Esmeralda (above), Frollo gives vent to his inner turmoil in the song "Hell's Fire" (left).

checking the work of others. Zielinski, however, thinks the trade-off is worth the effort. "I love being the supervising animator. It's frustrating because I wish I could work more, but it's gratifying to see it come to life."

The productivity of Zielinski and her staff is dependent on the complexity of the sequence. "Sometimes I can go through five feet of film a day," she said. "On other days, I can only do a couple of frames. It depends on the scene. Sometimes you're just searching for the right acting for the character. Sometimes things just come to you—you just get on a roll and you're able to crank stuff out."

The most difficult scene with Frollo appears at the end of the "Hellfire" number, when the camera moves away from him. "It's like a crane shot, but it's all animated by hand," said Zielinski. "I had to animate him moving in perspective, with the perspective moving to the ceiling. We start closeup on his face, and by the end of the scene he's this tiny figure—all done with animated camera movements; plus, effects are in there doing the same thing. It's the end of the "Hellfire" scene, and Frollo is saying, 'She will be mine or she will burn,' and he goes into this long crescendo. It's very surreal and abstract, with all these shadows with crosses on them around him. It's pretty spectacular."

While the live-action reference footage with costumes that the studio gives the animators is a good place from which to start, another household item has traditionally provided a first-hand reference point.

"I look at myself in the mirror quite often," said Zielinski, "because I'm basically doing the performance. I look at what kind of expression I have on my face and try to capture that with Frollo's design on paper. A little bit of the character sometimes comes from the actors themselves with something I hadn't thought about, but at least 90% of it comes from me. The most challenging aspect is getting a real, believable performance. I want people to feel, 'Wow, he's really a bad person.'"

Animators generally work only on their character in a sequence; if another character appears in the scene, that character's animator will take over and finish the scene. Sometimes, however, characters are so integrated in a sequence that it may become necessary for an animator to draw more than their specific character.

"Basically, you work back and forth," Zielinski said. "I have the animator of Esmeralda

do just the first drawing, so I could get an idea of size. I put my character in and make scribbles where Esmeralda should be; then he'll go back in and do some of what her actions are, and then I have to go back in and do my reactions to him. So it's complicated.

"Sometimes I do more than one character," she said. "For instance, there is a scene where Frollo tries to grab this smoky image of Esmeralda that comes out of the fireplace while he's having a fantasy. I did both characters there. She's half character and half effects, so what I did was draw her on model, with just a few ideas of stuff floating around her, like her clothing. Then effects take it a step further and make her look smoky. They do all the shading and rendering and add even more to what I did. I'm the bare bones and they'll fill it in."

The voice of the demented Frollo, by Tony Jay, provided a great inspiration for the anima-

tors. "I do refer to the tapes of his performance, although they have to be very contained when performing, so there are no other sounds like the rustling of clothes," she explained. Inspiration also comes from watching the actual recording sessions. "I watched the way he projected his voice and his mannerisms. It was great watching him perform the 'Hellfire' part of the song 'Heaven's Light/ Hell's Fire.' I was just blown away watching him sing that.

"The first part of it is Quasimodo singing," she continued. "They're both singing about Esmeralda, and Quasi has a completely different thought about Esmeralda than Frollo. He thinks she is just an angel—as opposed to Frollo, who is completely obsessed. I think it's the centerpiece of the film, because it's them showing how they feel. It's certainly the high point for Frollo, because he is always in control and in that song you see what's inside him, his burning desire."

Zielinski believes that Frollo is the best villain yet to come out of the animation unit. His complexity elevates him to the top of her list. "There have been some great villains in the past," she said, "but we're really pushing the limits in terms of acting and getting inside him. He's not just after the gold or power. He has this internal struggle. He basically feels that he's good and he's trying to rid the world of evil, yet he has these feelings, that he feels are making him weak and that he is being lured into this other world that he doesn't want to be a part of. The closest he comes is to the Queen in SNOW WHITE." □

Frollo, the Minister of Justice, tries to enlist Phoebus, the Captain of the Guard, in his plan against the Gypsies, but Phoebus remains skeptical.



that was a draw for her, too. She worked out perfectly. Her voice has warmth; it has toughness. There's kind of a hard-bitten quality to it, but at the same time there's a sensitive side."

They drew the same reaction when casting the voice of Phoebus, the gallant Captain of the Guard. "The first name on the list was Kevin Kline," Wise continued. "Who can be witty and charming—a leading man, but a little bit off the beaten track, not a typical leading man? Again, we wanted a Kevin Kline type and lo and behold we got him. We took the artwork to New York and sold him on doing it. He just brought the character to life."

According to Hahn, "The legend, or the story, goes that, while Hugo was nosing around Notre Dame, he found Greek letters carved into the stone up in the bell tower. These letters, when translated, meant 'fate.' And he thought, 'Who carved that? What person 300 years ago carved that?' That was supposed to be the beginnings of Quasimodo."

Casting the title role was tricky, because this film would stray from the conventional vision of the hideous hunchback, whom Hugo described as having "a horseshoe mouth, a small left eye half hidden by a bristly red eyebrow, while the right eye disappeared entirely behind an enormous wart, irregular teeth jagged here and there like the battlements of a fortress and that horny lip over which one of those teeth protruded like an elephant's tusk, and a forked chin." Disney's Quasimodo is closer to Charles Laughton than Lon Chaney. The directors didn't want to make the character too grotesque; they knew that for a musical fantasy film they would have to tone down the horror aspects considerably.

"The character had to sing and dance," said Wise. "That was our biggest departure from the original story." Added Trousdale, "We didn't play him deaf. We had 85 minutes to tell the story so we thought we had enough problems. Victor Hugo will forgive us, I'm sure."

"We really didn't know what it was we wanted out of Quasi-

DOUBLE DIRECTORS

"These films are so big that it's better as a two-headed monster," said producer Don Hahn. "The two directors collaborate with each other and knock ideas around."



Animation directors Kirk Wise (left) and Gary Trousdale (right).

modo because he's one of the most unusual characters," said Trousdale. "He's a human, but he's kind of on that line between fantasy and reality."

"We wanted someone who had a youngish character, a naive quality," said Wise. "We didn't want him to sound too handsome. We didn't want him to sound too affected. We didn't want it to sound like somebody putting on an affected speech-impaired voice."

The directors spent hours at auditions listening to voices, shielding their eyes so as not to be swayed by the physical appearance of the actors reading for the part. Instead, they had the drawing of the characters in front of them, so that they could imagine the voice coming from the character.

After much searching, Roy Connelly suggested Tom Hulce (MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN), who had been Oscar nominated for his performance in AMADEUS. To everyone's surprise, it turned out that he had a fine singing voice. "You could listen to this voice and see it coming out of this character," said Trousdale. "A lot of actors who read

sounded like handsome Broadway leading men coming out of this character."

Rounding out the leads are Tony Jay as Frolo and Paul Kandel as Cloppin, the King of the Gypsies.

In the time-honored Disney tradition, the film also has some amusing supporting players. These usually serve a dual purpose: not only do they provide the lighter moments, they also act as companions to the solitary protagonist. Snow White had the forest animals; Cinderella had the household mice; now Quasimodo has a trio of talking Gargoyles. While the point may be lost on contemporary audiences, the Gargoyles, who hop about on their own pedestals, are named Victor, Hugo and Laverne, a sort of tribute to the author and the Andrews Sisters. Victor is played by Charles Kimbrough and animated by Dave Pruiksma who also drew Hugo. Jason Alexander (George Castanza on SEINFELD) plays Hugo. The grandmotherly Laverne was voiced by the late Mary Wickes, whose character was animated by Will Finn.

"This is one of the rare instances where the original au-

The Great Animation Renaissance

By Michael Lyons

In less than ten years, animation has become the oft-mentioned phoenix, raising its celluloid wings from the ashes of obscurity to become not only a popular film genre but an expanding art form as well. Many have said that animation is in fact in the midst of a renaissance of sorts. So, after years of almost becoming a footnote in film history, what's it like to be part of this animation resurgence? The question was posed to the following industry professionals:

SIMON WELLS (director, BALTO): "To be part of any renaissance must be really inspiring. In this particular case, it's coming out of the sort of doldrums, where animation was regarded pretty much as a Saturday morning thing, even feature animation was kind of at that level and now, Disney in particular, proved that not only can animated features be successful, but they can be some of the most successful films of all time. Animation is beginning to be regarded far more seriously and that's pleasing for us as artists."

RUBEN AQUINO (supervising animator, POCAHONTAS and the upcoming LEGEND OF MULAN): "In a very real sense, it's been a dream come true, and I'm not just saying that to be corny. When I started at Disney, the whole atmosphere in feature animation, and animation in general, was kind of downbeat and we thought it was just a matter of time before all animation got sent overseas, or feature animation became economically non-viable. Then, within less than ten years, it's turned around completely. When we did [THE LITTLE] MERMAID, I was giving a talk and someone asked me, 'What's your goal at Disney?' I told them that I would love it if I could be part of making Disney films as good as they used to be. We may not have achieved the level of animation that they achieved in the 'Golden Age,' but actually on a lot of levels, I think we have recaptured some of that past glory."

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PHIL ROMAN (founder and president, Film Roman studios, producer of *THE SIMPSONS*): "Though there's more competition and more studios, there's also more opportunities in this and other countries. There's new technology and new ways of using animation. It's the busiest now than I can ever remember it, and it keeps getting busier, and it keeps getting better."

ANDREAS DEJA (supervising animator, *ALADDIN*, *THE LION KING*, and the upcoming *HERCULES*): "It's exciting. Sometimes you drive to work and pinch yourself. You don't want to rest on your laurels, because the goal is to always get better. An awkward question will come up at animation meetings: 'Do you think you're as good as the old guys?' And, I say, 'No, I don't.' But, I don't think that's any reason to throw in the towel. We've shown we can reach a lot of people with our storytelling, that we've grown up in animation. Our stories are becoming quite good. In terms of the acting, the drawing, the subtlety of performance, there's always room for growth. ...It's not a question of doing what the 'old guys' did and moving a dog exactly like they did in *LADY AND THE TRAMP*. It's the degree of excellence you're always after. Some animators are less bothered by that and some, like me, are driven crazy by it!"

JEFF SEGAL (founder and president of Universal Cartoon Studios, producer of TV's *BACK TO THE FUTURE* and *EARTHWORM JIM*): "It's very gratifying, because animation is an exceptionally viable art form. It is no less viable than live-action, and I think to be able to move the audience away from the conception that animation is only for little kids—animated entertainment can be something that will appeal to teenagers, young adults, college kids, families—is very gratifying. It's an art form that has not yet been fully exploited."

CHARLES SOLOMON (author of *ENCHANTED DRAW*)

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CARTOON CASTING

"Usually, you start with pie in the sky ideas," said Wise. "You suggest Esmeralda is a Demi Moore-type. So you put Moore at the top of the list, thinking, 'We'll never get her.'"



The character of Esmeralda appealed to Demi Moore, who turned out to be a big fan of Disney animation.

thor actually supplied the animal sidekick for us," said Trousdale. "Quasimodo speaks to the Gargoyles and to the bells in the book as if they were real. He's named them, so it was the next logical step in animation to make them literally real."

Casting the Gargoyles proved difficult. The directors had actually settled on three actors, when the producers said they were dissatisfied—something about the trio was missing.

"Charles Kimbrough is the only survivor of our original cast of Gargoyles," said Trousdale. "Kathy Zielinski had drawn this Gargoyle, and we were looking at what types these Gargoyles were. There was the John Belushi type. One would be wild, and one would be stuffy. Charles Kimbrough nailed it the first time. We had a young Cindy Lauper type cast for a while, and she was terrific, but it wasn't giving us enough variety among the trio."

There was one uncomfortable period when impatient Disney executives, seeing the problem of casting the creatures, were questioning the need for three Gargoyles.

"We argued that we wanted three," said Trousdale, "and would take more if they would



give them to us. The big breakthrough was when we reconceived the Laverne character as this crotchety Ruth Gordon type—Mrs. Potts' cranky older sister, a more edgy cantankerous character."

Facing the animators was the realization that the historical nature of the film would call for sweeping sets and hordes of people. Unlike the rural village setting of such films as *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, this story would take place in an urban environment.

"We started on the most difficult sequences first," said Wise. "We knew from the get go that, even though this story takes place in the fairy tale world, it is the world of Paris in medieval times. There were going to be shots in this film that were going to require literally a cast of thousands."

"In *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, we had scenes in the tavern when they're singing to Gaston," said Trousdale. "The song was written for a cast of

30-40 guys. We were getting all kinds of heat from upstairs saying, 'Can't you just have these two guys singing to each other? Look at the time and the cost of all these people!' Now, we're looking at the Feast of Fools with the square full of people, this wall-to-wall carpet of people, with all of them moving, all of them dancing."

To portray the large, living populace, an overall feeling of movement was necessary. "You need this constant movement," said Wise. "Otherwise you're never going to buy it. We wanted to break new ground here. Animation has never had that epic feeling like *SPARTACUS* or *BEN HUR*. How could you do that convincingly?"

Inspiration for the epic crowd scenes was supplied by the animators' work on the wildebeest stampede sequence in *THE LION KING*. Wise and Trousdale decided to take that technology and fashion it to their own ends for *HUNCHBACK*. They created a 3-D image of a person, then a half dozen people, and multiplied that in different ways to create a digital cast of thousands, behind the hand-drawn characters.

The CGI department was approached for help in handling the crowd scenes. A description bandied about by the directors was that the scenes should suggest a medieval New York, with that kind of scale to the buildings and density of population.

Quasimodo does a lot of swinging, dangling, and jumping around the upper spires and arches of the Cathedral. While these would be logistical nightmares in a live-action film, Trousdale believes the animation process made it easier. "We don't need the cranes and the helicopters," he said. "It still takes a fair amount of logistical planning to figure out the perspective and what's moving at what ratio to what. Basically, it's only bound by the imagination and ambition of Ed Chertner, layout supervisor, David Goetz, the art director, and us."

"What Goetz and Chertner are trying to do is to get big, long, seamless shots where the camera moves through the city

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HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

ART DIRECTION

Dave Goetz on visualizing Hugo's medieval setting.

Dan Scapperotti

Rarely have the Disney animators been confronted with setting their action in an urban environment, especially not a medieval one. This was a challenge facing art director Dave Goetz on *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, who saw the city as a medieval New York—a far cry from the pastoral simplicity of fairy tale films like *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* and *SNOW WHITE*. A 13-year veteran of Don Bluth Productions, Goetz returned to California from Bluth's Ireland studios in 1993 and enlisted with the Disney organization.

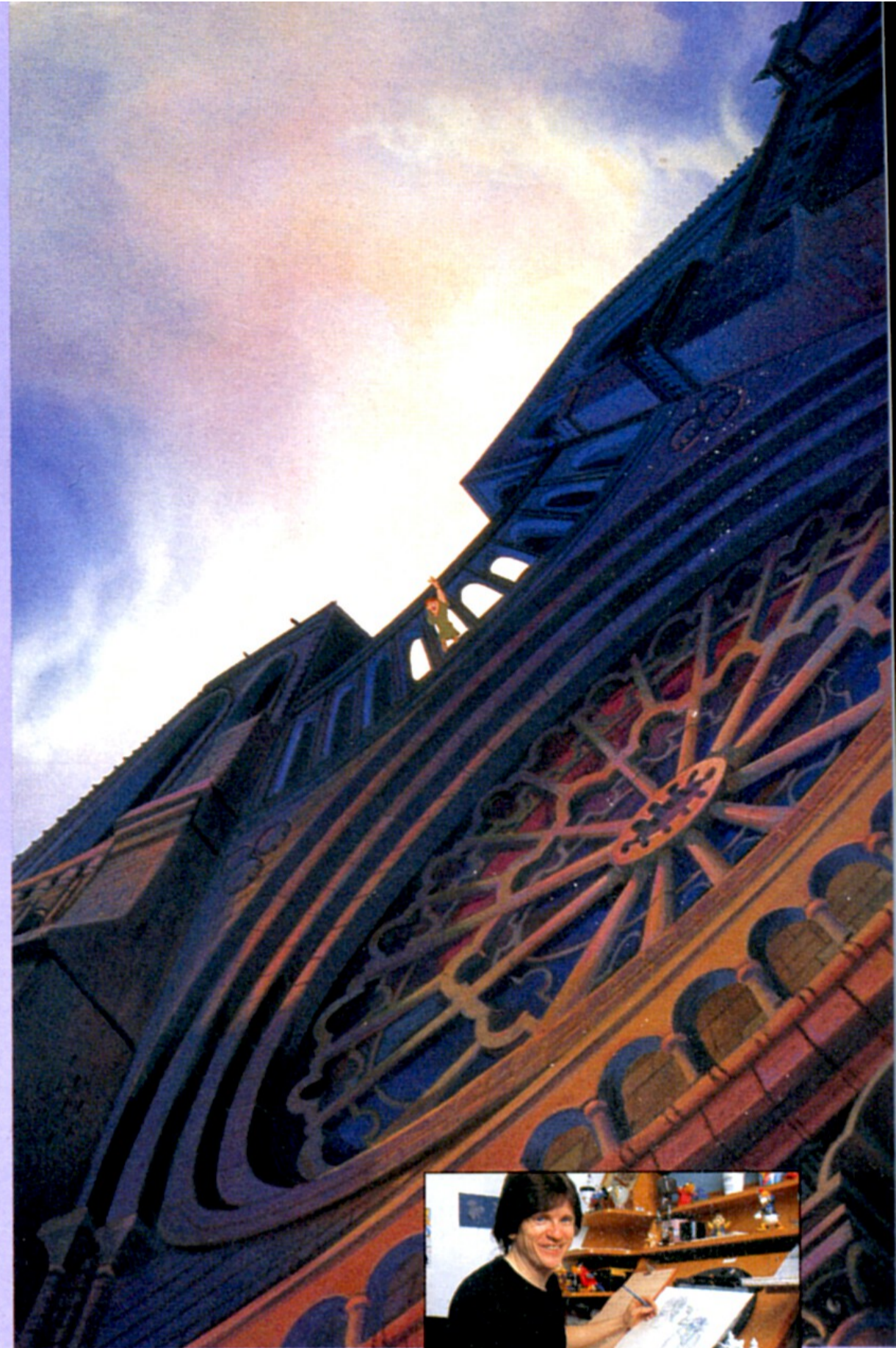
Goetz had spent four months on preproduction for *SONG OF THE SEA* when *HUNCHBACK* came along. "My title is art director," he said, "which is pretty nebulous, I admit. I was picked for the visual style of my painting. I got into art direction to unify the look of the pictures."

For six months the studio had several people working on preproduction drawings for the proposed film, using the vast Disney reference library to help determine the ultimate look. "I think from that body of work Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale picked the style that they liked," said Goetz. "They liked the look of the pieces I was doing for them. That look was characterized by a dark edge, a moodiness to it, a graphic quality—kind of partial lights and darks. It has a dramatic staging in terms of how the darks and lights are played, which seemed appropriate to me at the time."

Looking for an authenticity with regards to the great Cathedral of Notre Dame, the studio sent Goetz and several other artists to Paris, where they got a first-hand look at the Gothic architecture. Goetz and his staff spent two days in Notre Dame. Not only did Goetz go up into the tower opened to the public, he was allowed access to the second tower, generally closed to visitors. The trip served to reinforce the designs that were being established for the film at the studio. Also, an intensive eight-hour lecture by a noted French historian gave the Disney team an insight into both the City of Lights and Victor Hugo himself.

"Victor Hugo's view of the world was pretty pointed," Goetz said. "He saw the streets of Paris as being like Hell and the Cathedral as reaching toward Heaven. He has this big metaphor of the man in the middle, Quasimodo. The thing that fascinates me about it is it's a romanticization of the medieval model of the universe, which is the same kind of stratification. He took that and condensed it into the city of Paris. Hugo was this intense Paris booster. He was really a fan of the city, and it was his world. So in the book he kind of makes it the whole universe. You never get outside of Paris, and he lays this metaphor on top of it, which takes it even further in terms of how he thought people of the time might've seen the world."

The Paris sojourn enabled Goetz and company to get first-



Art director Dave Goetz (inset) tried to capture Hugo's view of Notre Dame as reaching toward Heaven.

hand impressions of art contemporary to Hugo's time. Haunting the museums and art galleries of the city, they viewed the works of French and Parisian illustrators of the time.

"We saw the same kind of thinking, the same kind of graphic scheme in those pieces—strong, moody lighting and everything kind of helping to focus the character or focus some kind of action or event," said Goetz. "From there we actually went to Victor Hugo's own work. He did watercolors. He was also a caricaturist. His watercolors, which are landscapes, are extremely haunting and extremely stark and have a real desolate feeling about them. We thought, 'Maybe we're on the right track here.' Once we saw what we're calling the

Hugo metaphor and saw his own work, we felt good about the direction we were going."

One of Goetz' goals is to create the feeling of a believable lighting system within the confines of the animated film. "That is very important to me," said Goetz. "In a scene where you have a little pool of light in the front, when the characters walk out of a shadow, the shadow actually animates off them. Often, it's done another way, with just a cross dissolve, or it's not done at all. That's one thing that we pay a lot of attention to. We picked our moments to use that effect just to create a very believable sense of atmosphere."

The cathedral is depicted almost as a character itself. The artists didn't want to caricature the church too much, and a lot



Goetz stretched the height of the Cathedral and exaggerated the overall scale, in relation to its surroundings.

of time was spent considering how the landmark should be treated. "We have stretched it slightly to be more vertical," said Goetz. "We have probably exaggerated the overall scale, making it bigger in general. But in terms of pulling the shapes out and making them cartoony, we pretty much tried to stick more to the realistic side than the broader side.

"I think the things that have been done to it tend to be very subtle. My biggest concern was just to get a solid drawing, because it's such a complicated thing to draw. The basic forms are just boxes, but when you get into these portals that have millions of characters on them, the level that you're going to simplify becomes important."

Originally, there was talk of using computers to create the Cathedral. Although those plans were dropped, some computer graphics were used during production. "We did use it for a partial creation of the Cathedral," Goetz advised. "There is a shot that we call the buttress surfing shot. The flying buttresses that Quasimodo comes down are like an arch with a piece on top. He's standing on the roof and jumps down. He slides down the top of that, and it connects to an upright that is actually a part of the side of the Cathedral. He slides down that and ends up on a Gargoyle and does the business with the water. That's all a 3-D cathedral that has texture matted onto it and background paintings that have been matted

onto the side."

Although the towers and the face of the Cathedral were not computer generated, a partial 3-D model was built in the computer. "For the sanctuary shot, when Quasimodo stands up on the railing with Esmeralda, we built a section up there. The camera will come around very cleverly, so that you don't have to build an entire building front. You just catch the front of the railing. The camera comes up and rotates when it shoots down into the square where our 3-D crowd of people are."

The art department had to devise several large sets for the production: the square where much of the action takes place, with the Cathedral acting as one wall; the underground lair of the Gypsies, called the Court of Miracles; and the Palace of Justice, which "is where Frolo does business," said Goetz. "He's a judge, basically, although we never see him in a courtroom so it comes off more like an evil castle. It has a lot of stylized Gothic motifs, which are meant to mimic his kind of rigid, stickly personality. You have little brittle spires that have all kind of gobby gook all over them."

The art director creates the stage on which the animated figures play out their roles. These sets must be kept as simple as possible, to make it easier for the animators to move their casts. "You try not to have too much stuff that they would walk through because the ani-

mator didn't see it," advised Goetz. "If you have to have him stepping over buckets all the time it makes it difficult for the animator, so you clear the decks for the path of action. You artfully place things around the path of action so, if you want the feeling maybe of haphazard junk around, you've got it, but it's not in anybody's way."

Part of the art director's job at Disney, along with a color model partner, is to develop the film's color palette for all the characters and scenes. "I may spend about three hours a day in the color model room," said Goetz, "where our monitor will pull up the background and the character. In the beginning, we'll set the basic daylight colors; then while working through the movie, we're adjusting those colors to marry in with the

background. So if I'm putting you in a night scene, I'm going to dial some blue into you to get you to go with the night-time atmosphere in the background."

The Cathedral is so central to the story that in preproduction meetings it was realized that Hugo had used Notre Dame as a character, a living emblem to tell his story. "It doesn't have eyes or a mouth or anything like that," said Goetz, "but you'll feel its mood in particular scenes, the overall idea being that it is a force for good that welcomes friends and punishes enemies. So when Frolo kills Mrs. Modo in the beginning and is about to drop the baby down the well, the Archdeacon comes out and basically plays that card. He says you can do whatever you want, but you've done this right under the eyes of the church. The thing that sells it is all the saints staring down from the portals.

"On a different note, later on when Esmeralda is singing her song there's a moment when the sun comes out and shines through this rose window. There is this incredible golden glow—a very warm, inviting, and nurturing moment. It's meant to be the church's welcome to Esmeralda, a friend of the church. The threat that the church kind of makes in the first sequence is sort of paid off in this multi-light scene. The way the film ends, when Frolo falls to his death off of the top of the parapet, is kind of a pay off for any kind of a set up that we've done." □

Although most of the Notre Dame Cathedral was hand-drawn, for the so-called "surfing buttress shot," a portion was created in the computer.



HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

ADAPTATION

Will Finn on condensing the novel down to size.

Dan Scapperotti

The comic relief in *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* is provided by a trio of Gargoyles, who may be just figments of Quasimodo's lonely imagination. Along with some pigeons and his beloved bells, these Gargoyles—Victor, Hugo, and Laverne—are Quasimodo's only friends.

Will Finn wears two hats on the production. He is both the head of story as well as the supervising animator of the distaff member of the Gargoyle trio, Laverne. Although his background is in animation, Finn has also had some experience with story development. Directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale wanted him to be involved with them and the writers in shaping the story and delineating the characters.

While in a Pittsburgh commercial art school, Finn met Eric Larson, the legendary Disney animator. Larson was fishing for candidates for the Disney training school, and Finn grabbed the hook. Finn animated Grimsby, the Butler, and worked on Sebastian the Crab in *LITTLE MERMAID*, as well as Cogsworth in *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* and Iago in *ALADDIN*.

Storyboarding *HUNCHBACK* was actually the job of 18-20 story artists. The first, concise outline for the plot was penned by Tab Murphy, who also wrote the first three drafts. With Murphy's plotline and characters well delineated, it was up to Finn and the directors

to flesh out the film and unravel the complexities of the story.

"We built up the Gargoyles and played down the love story," said Finn. "Initially, the love story was a bigger part of the plot. David Stainton was the person who actually came up with the idea, which was to combine the story of *HUNCHBACK* with the story of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, so the love story of Phoebus and Esmeralda would be nurtured along by Quasimodo, playing *Cyrano*, writing poetry for Phoebus. We wanted to play that down, and now the love story is a sort of sub-plot, because the real story that kept on surfacing—the main spine of the story, if you will—was Quasimodo's struggle to get self worth and to join the world out there beyond the walls. He also had to overcome Frolo, who has been his oppressive stepfather through two decades."

Because the premise of the



Story editor Will Finn (inset) also served double duty, animating one of Quasimodo's Gargoyle friends (above) who—like the stuffed tiger in *Calvin and Hobbes*—come to life in his imagination.



book is at right angles to the plot of Disney's new film, some major character changes were necessary. Finn had to create a new back story for Frolo. "Basically, Frolo killed Quasimodo's mother," said Finn. "As a young judge out to get the Gypsies, he ran down this woman with a baby he thought was stolen, then tried to flush the baby down a well. This all happened right in front of the cathedral at night, and the Archdeacon shamed him into becoming the caretaker of the baby."

So hideous does Frolo find his new charge that he decides to keep him locked in the bell tower. "Steven Schwartz wrote a great lyric when Frolo says, 'All right, and who knows? Maybe this foul creature may someday be of use to me'. So he's got an ulterior motive even

then. Some sinister intuition tells him that this is going to be a valuable asset, and he winds up using Quasimodo in the story to defeat the Gypsies. Unwittingly, poor Quasimodo is led right into a trap."

Confronted with Hugo's daunting novel, everyone concerned in *HUNCHBACK* was forced to face the terrifying fact that there are no Cliff Notes! "Lord knows we looked," Finn admitted. "It's real heavy reading and a very complicated story. When Walt Tab was writing the script, we all picked up pocket copies. The book is about the church and these characters who revolve around it. The central character is actually Frolo, who is fighting with the good and evil within himself; Quasimodo is his henchman. Our challenge was to make the story Quasimodo's. Even the other film versions stay much more faithful to the book, or go off in different directions."

Once the Disney project was announced, everyone expected animated Gargoyles. "If Jim Henson were involved, you'd get Gargoyle puppets," said Finn. "In the script, there were two Gargoyles, Boris and Bela, who sort of commented on things. It was Tab's tribute to his favorite horror actors. There was another character, a stained glass window that Quasimodo used to see the world outside. That sort of evolved into the little toy village that he's built to imagine himself in the world

In earlier drafts of the script, Quasimodo's relationship with Phoebus was along the lines of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, but this approach was dropped.





Victor, Hugo, and Laverne (inset) are the names Quasimodo gives to three gargoyles who come to life in his imagination and give voice to his thought.

outside. We also talked about some other characters: rats, bats, spiders. But the story on its own was so layered and complex that we just got it down to the three Gargoyles characters as his sidekicks."

Much like the toy tiger in the *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip, the Gargoyles are real only to Quasimodo: Hobbs looks completely different when he's talking to Calvin than when others see him as just a stuffed animal; the same convention was used for the Gargoyles. The trio are supposed to be broken Gargoyles that either fell off the Cathedral or were rejected by the stone cutters; like Quasimodo, they too have been cast aside. In early discussions, the animators had considered giving their Gargoyles legs, but that was eventually rejected in favor of having them hop about on their own pedestals.

"Quasimodo has salvaged

them," Finn explained. "We had planned to have him introduce them to Esmeralda. He'd tell her each Gargoyle's little story: that Laverne had been up there as long as he has, that Victor fell off the seventh tower, and Hugo was never finished by the stone cutter. We had that in there for a long time, but it just fell out. I think it was a neat idea. Hopefully, the feeling is in there, but there never seemed to be room to do it."

Quasimodo's inner voices are represented by these characters, each of whom address a different aspect of his thoughts. "Victor is the stuffy one," said Finn. "He wants to do the right thing but usually for all the boring reasons. Hugo is the one I call the Emperor of the Perverse because he is this Belushiesque character who wanted to do everything for all the wrong reasons. In the middle, we have Laverne, who is the sensible

conscience, the voice of wisdom for Quasimodo."

Laverne was originally a much younger character, before the story team turned her into a little old lady, with a bit of inspiration from Ruth Gordon in *HAROLD AND MAUDE*. The female Gargoyle was in danger of becoming extinct at one point. When the writers seemed stumped on how to develop her character, the corporate brass talked about cutting her out.

"It was easy to do Victor and Hugo," said Finn, "because they'd just be on the opposite side of a question. There was a strong sentiment that we didn't need a middle one because Quasimodo is the middle one. I felt this way, and a lot of people felt that way. But, if he could articulate those things, then the movie would be over; if he was able to zero in on that kind of wisdom, then he wouldn't have this problem. So Laverne is really that voice for him. And when we got Mary Wickes as the voice that really defined the character, too." (Mary Wickes, recognized for her role as Sister Mary Lazarus in *SISTER ACT* and its sequel, died at the age of 79 last October. Wickes had a

long career on both stage and screen. She was also the live action reference model for Cruella De Vil in *101 DALMATIANS*.)

In bringing Laverne to life, Finn was confronted with a major contrast in a character with a gentle, grandmotherly personality and a very grotesque, almost sinister face. "You can't do all the standard things that you want to do graphically with this kind of character," Finn explained. "Her speeches are done in a very sweet and pleasant voice. Naturally, you want to make the eyes real big and the mouth real small. You want this soft and pleasant face. Instead, she has these beady sinister eyes and a big monkey mouth and is really very grotesque. The first couple of scenes I did were gag scenes, so they were easy. Later, when she was having her heart to heart talks with Quasimodo and telling him he has to stop being a spectator of life and get out there and join the world, those were the scenes that I was really struggling with. Then I realized that this is playing against type. Once I figured that out it became relatively easy."

continued on page 60

INGS and THE DISNEY THAT NEVER WAS): "On one hand, it's very gratifying, and on the other you have to watch out that you're not smug, saying, 'I told you so.' The audience for good animated films was always there; it's just that studio executives have begun to realize that. You also have a whole new generation of people now at the studios, in executive positions, who grew up on animation, as anyone in this country under 50 did. All of us who are Baby Boomers, or Generation Xers, grew up watching animation on TV, and the Baby Boomers actually got the best of it, because we got to watch uncensored Warner, Disney, and MGM shorts on TV everyday. So we learned to love animation and to see a validity to it that an older generation may not have, because it was still so new and regarded as a novelty.

"The younger generation got cheated, because they grew up on the bad Saturday morning stuff that we make fun of. But, now that the Boomers are becoming parents, they want their children to have the same experience and the same delight that they did."

ERIC GOLDBERG (co-director, *POCAHONTAS*): "It's great, I won't make any bones about that. It's very warming to walk into a store and see a Genie T-shirt, or to be able to understand that people take these things home with them and watch them and enjoy them and really understand what it took to actually get it there, and even if they don't, just the fact that they enjoy them so much, is a huge, huge, wonderful thing.

"I was working in London, and it took about 13 years from the time I left America to the time I returned for America to actually re-embrace animation. When I left, nobody wanted to know about animation. Films like *LITTLE MERMAID* and *ROGER RABBIT* and TV shows like *THE SIMPSONS* started to bring people's interest back to the medium again, which is wonderful. I think it's a wonderful thing to live back in my own country and do something I love doing and know that other people are enjoying it, too. That's a great feeling." □

LEADING MAN OR MONSTER?

"We really didn't know what we wanted out of Quasimodo" said Trousdale. "because he's the most unusual character. He's human but on the line between reality and fantasy."



Like the Elephant Man, Quasimodo constructs artful miniatures of the outside world. Inset: Tom Hulce.

and you allow the camera to tell the story. And they've been very successful. That's a technological advance. It's the ability to create the illusion of this real 3-D environment, using two-dimensional art work."

Freeing up the camera movement was a priority for the directors. They had experimented with such movement on *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* and were anxious to continue the fluidity of the action. "We wanted to get a more live action feel," said Wise, "and a three-dimensional world without it being three dimensional. There are some shots that have dozens and dozens of layers of art work that are all combined to give them the illusion of a multiplane 3-D world."

Trousdale admits that this is really only an advanced version of the technology that Walt Disney developed with the multiplane camera. Although the artistry of those pioneers was limited by the number of levels they could use, generally 12 or 13, the latest versions have a capacity of upwards of 300 levels. The highest the new feature has achieved is near 150 levels.

Picking the moments for these master set pieces was a concern. The directors didn't



want to lose the impact of these effects by crowding in a mass of multiplane shots; instead, they waited for musical sequences that would add a soaring feeling to the scene.

"We try to match the movement of the camera to the emotion of the song," Wise said, "especially when Quasimodo sings and expresses his yearning to be part of the outside world. We really wanted to make the outside world as spectacular as possible with these panoramic vistas."

Every Disney film tries to push the technological envelope, and *HUNCHBACK* is no exception. "The CGI folks have pressed the technology in terms of crowds out on the streets," advised Don Hahn. "I think what Kirk and Gary want to do is create these big, epic-scale street scenes of medieval Paris, much like Hugo was able to articulate in the novel. So they turned to Kirin Joshi, our CGI supervisor, to animate human beings for the first time, which was kind of a stretch. What Kirin and his animators were

able to do was to take the software that enabled us to do scenes like the wildebeest stampede in *LION KING* or the ballroom in *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, and push that to be able to get these massive crowd scenes. For years, traditionally animation would have done that with the help of held cels. So you would have kind of a held crowd. If you go back and look at *SLEEPING BEAUTY* or *CINDERELLA*, you see these big ballroom shots with everyone quietly paying attention. That's because it is really impossible to animate a huge crowd like this."

It appears that the Gypsy dancing girl, Esmeralda, will look like the sexiest animated character since Jessica Rabbit. Being the focal point for the attention of three very different men, Esmeralda certainly couldn't be any shrinking violet.

"I think, if you chart the babe factor from *Snow White* on, it goes up over the years," Wise happily pointed out. "One of the important things in this movie, as well as in Victor Hugo's story, was that Esmeralda really had to be striking because basically three men—Quasimodo, Frollo, and Phoebus—all fall in love with the same woman. She has to be somebody who would make you drive your car up on the curb."

"And she wasn't like Belle," said Trousdale, "who was the prettiest girl in town but kind of looks like the librarian. You've got to do a double take when you see Esmeralda. She's an exotic dancer—that's her job. She has a little bit of the outlaw quality to her. She's the first Disney bad-girl heroine."

Changes had to be made to Hugo's original narrative. In the novel, Phoebus, the handsome soldier, betrays Esmeralda by his cowardice. The Gypsy is accused of using sorcery to murder Phoebus and condemned to die. Although Phoebus lives, he is afraid to clear the doomed woman because he might be accused of using the black arts himself. This doesn't exactly fit in with a typical Disney hero. Hugo also kills off most of his cast, with the final scene set in a



The Feast of Fools is one of several sequences meant to suggest the number of extras once seen in elaborate live-action costume epics—an animation first.

mausoleum where the bones of Esmeralda and Quasimodo are discovered years later.

Confronted with adapting the classic novel to the screen, the producer and directors avoided a literal interpretation in favor of an overall thematic approach. “The biggest changes we made from Victor Hugo is that we didn’t have the entire cast die,” Wise advised. “We combined a couple of the characters. We did the same thing on BEAUTY. Belle had several suitors who were after her. She had jealous sisters and hawky, conceited suitors. We boiled those down to Gaston. In the book, Phoebus was a lot like Gaston, but we didn’t want to go that route and have another pretty boy. So we made Phoebus a good guy and combined his best qualities with another character—the poet Gringoire, who is this romantic. So we thought we would reconceive Phoebus as a soldier with the heart of a poet.”

In fact, in the novel it is Gringoire who marries Esmeralda. Brought into the Gypsies’ Court of Miracles, the poet is sentenced to death unless some woman will marry him. It is Esmeralda who steps forward and saves the doomed man. It is, of course, a marriage in name only, because Esmeralda’s heart belongs to Phoebus.

“Translating a great piece of literature like Hugo’s novel into an animated film is a real challenge,” said Don Hahn, “and it’s a musical, no less. This was the biggest challenge overall in terms of story telling. We’re really lucky that Kirk and Gary have backgrounds in story. They were smart, because they used Hugo’s themes of con-

trasts. Characters that have a lot of privileges, characters that have no privileges, characters that are outcasts like the Gypsies, like Quasimodo, like Phoebus, the Captain of the Guards. They played all those themes in Hugo’s novel without trying to literally recreate the piece word for word—grabbing the essence of the novel without grabbing the literal moments of the novel. It is a film inspired by Victor Hugo’s novel, not a literal filming of the whole piece—as have all the film versions been. I saw a B&W French version with subtitles done in 1912 or something. It’s great. It’s a half hour distilled version of the story. So you take what was important to Hugo.”

The violent nature of the novel has been trimmed severely. Gone is Frollo’s attempted murder of Phoebus which leads to Esmeralda’s death sentence. Instead, Frollo enlists Phoebus’ aid as a soldier to hunt down the woman they both love. While Phoebus is torn between love and duty, Frollo’s passion is at odds with his hatred of the Gypsies who he believes are behind all the evil in Paris.

The producer’s logistical problems on HUNCHBACK were compounded by the fact that there were 700 people working on the film in three separate animation units: the studio in Burbank, a 25-person unit at the Florida studio, and, perhaps most appropriately, Disney’s new facility in France.

“I couldn’t do it without having great people working with me,” said Hahn, explaining how he manages to pull the whole process together. “I have

EPIC ANIMATION

“You need constant movement,” said Wise of animating crowd scenes. “We wanted to break new ground. Animation has never had that epic feel like BEN HUR or SPARTACUS.”

our associate producer Phil Lofaro, who, from a production nuts-and-bolts standpoint, pulls it all together. A terrific gentleman named Roy Connelly, who works in our Paris Studios, is my co-producer. He manages and produces the material that comes out of Paris. It’s interesting, because we can all only talk the first hour in the morning here because Paris is in its last hour of the day.”

The Paris group, which had worked on THE GOOFY MOVIE and DUCK TALES, consists of 150 artists who are producing several minutes of the film, including the opening, a five-minute song called “The Bells of Notre Dame.” They also produced several sequences for the film’s climax.

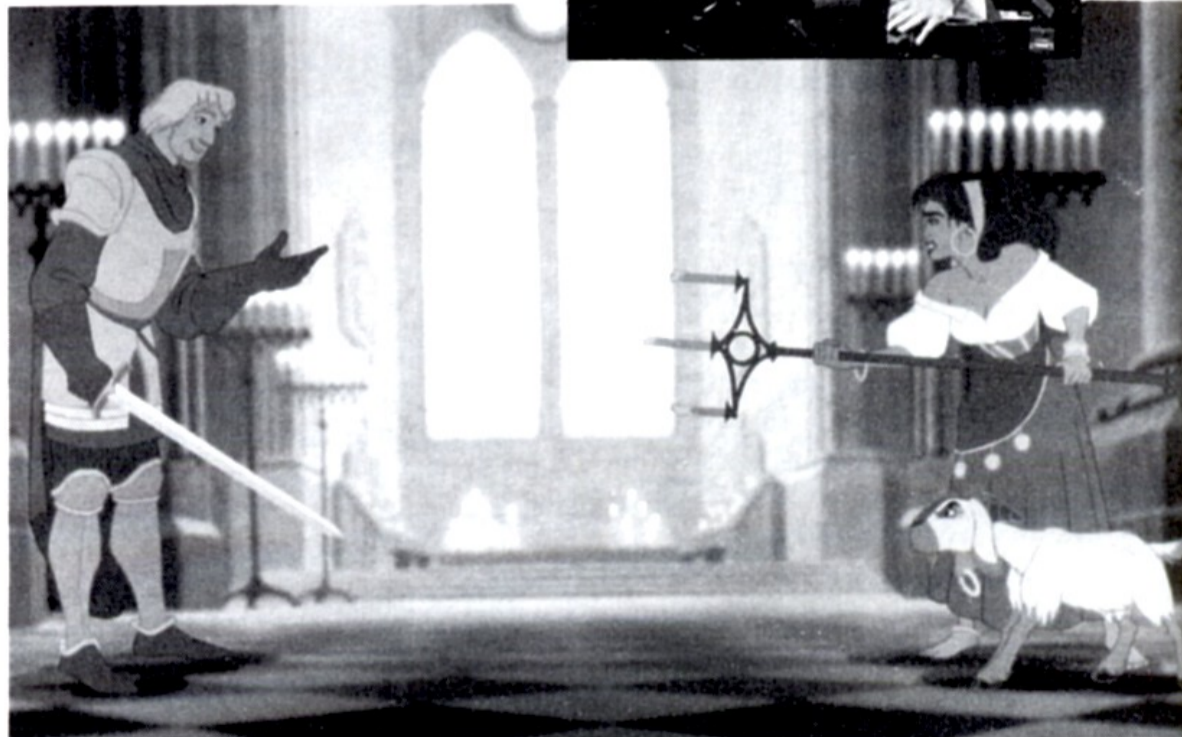
“There are two gentlemen named Paul and Gaetan Brizzi,” continued Hahn, “who story-boarded almost half of this movie. They’re Parisian and the sequence directors in the Paris unit. They provide the artistic leadership and screen the artwork before it comes over for Kirk and Gary to approve. So it provides a great conscience for

us to have that voice of French animators working on the film.

“James Baxter, who’s animating Quasimodo, also animated Rafiki in LION KING and Belle in BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. Randy Fullmore, our artistic coordinator, is kind of a jack of all trades, art director-meets-technology supervisor kind of guy. Randy was with us on LION KING and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.”

Unlike live-action filming, the animation process, as Hahn sees it, is about making the movie four and five times, and perhaps most difficult for the artists is saying goodbye to ideas or characters that they love but which don’t fit into the final film. “We make it in story sketch,” said the producer. “We make it in rough animation. We remake it and resculpt it and try to turn it into something that is really unique. We are a group of artists who are used to slaying our darlings. We say, ‘If it doesn’t work, let’s get rid of it and

Although, as Captain of the Guards he is technically under the command of Frollo, Phoebus tries to convince Esmeralda of his good intentions. Inset: Kevin Kline, voice of Phoebus.



HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

RETROSPECTIVE

From misunderstood man to movie monster—Quasimodo's films to date.

By Dan Scapperotti

The Frankenstein monster, Dracula, the Invisible Man, the Wolfman, and the Mummy reigned supreme on the horror screens of the '30s and '40s, courtesy of Universal Pictures. But during the earlier silent era, the studio, fearing that audiences would not accept the impossible on screen, had presented monsters of a more human sort, unfortunately deformed individuals such as Erik in *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and Victor Hugo's pathetic Quasimodo in *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (1925 and 1923, respectively, both starring Lon Chaney).

Despite the fact that he is neither the result of some alchemists tampering with the natural elements nor a supernatural creature of the night—merely a sad and miserable human, sentenced to a life of isolation and torment through an accident of birth—Quasimodo's place in the horror pantheon was insured by Universal's later efforts at merchandising their monsters in the '50s, aided by a helping hand from Forrest J Ackerman, who promoted Quasimodo from a secondary character in a historical drama to the lofty role of a star monster.

As one of literature's most intriguing characters, Quasimodo did not go unnoticed by the fledgling film industry. Several early silent efforts were made, including the French films *ESMERALDA* (1905) and *NOTRE DAME DE PARIS* (1911). The Americans got into the act with *THE DARLING OF PARIS* starring silent film vamp Theda Bara.

The film that put Quasimodo on the cinematic map was, of course, Universal's 1923 version. The film, directed by Wal-

lace Worsley, showcased the startling talents of Chaney as the hunchback and catapulted him into major stardom. The actor devised a painful makeup routine to create the grotesque features, making his Quasimodo the most hideous to reach the screen. The image of the actor being lashed in the center of the square remains the quintessential look of the hunchback even decades later. Although Chaney was behind the makeup, stuntman Joe Bonomo, the actor's double, performed the rigorous stunts in the film.

For decades, Irving Thalberg had been credited with first proposing the film project, a legend reinforced by the film *MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES*. Michael F. Blake in his new book, *A Thousand Faces*, disputes this and offers several pieces of correspondence showing that Chaney himself first proposed the idea.

Taking liberties with Hugo's novel, screenwriters Poore Sheehan and Edward T. Lowe added the traditional Hollywood ending: though Quasimodo saves Esmeralda, he must sacrifice his own life. They did, how-

Lon Chaney Sr. established the quintessential look of the character's malformed body in this famous scene from the 1923 Universal silent picture.



"Why was I not made of stone like thee?" A classic moment of pathos from Charles Laughton in the classic 1939 RKO version.

ever, keep one character often dismissed by later writers. In the novel, Paquette la Chantefleurie is a woman whose infant daughter was stolen by Gypsies. This act caused her to go mad and to harbor a crazed hatred for the Gypsies. It turns out that Esmeralda is her long lost daughter. In the film she becomes a noblewoman, Mme. De Gondelaurier, played by Kate Lester, who learns too late that the girl condemned to death is her daughter. Whereas many silent classics have been lost, *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* survives mostly intact, in a nice color-tinted print available from Kino Video.

It had been reported that, as early as 1932, Universal had John Huston writing a new version to star Boris Karloff, but that film never materialized. By 1939, RKO Pictures, which had hit big with *GUNGA DIN* early in the year, was searching for another blockbuster property. Screenwriters Sonya Levien and Bruno Frank turned their attention to adapting the Victor Hugo novel for the first sound version of the story.

Budgeted at over \$2 million, this is a true classic. Because of terrific performances by Charles Laughton as Quasimodo and the beautiful Maureen O'Hara, making her American screen debut as Esmeralda, this has become the definitive screen version.

With Phoebus dead in this version, Gringoire takes the romantic lead opposite Esmeralda. Played by Edmund O'Brien in his first film role, Gringoire is a bit overblown and too impressed with himself.

The screenwriters worried that making a priest the villain



Anthony Hopkins and Leslie-Anne Down took on the familiar roles in the upscale 1982 Hallmark Hall of Fame made-for-television version.

MONSTER MERCHANDISING

“Universal’s efforts at merchandising their monsters, aided by a helping hand from Forrest J Ackerman, promoted Quasimodo from secondary character to star monster.”

wouldn't pass the Hays censorship review, so they made Claude Frollo two distinct characters. Originally scheduled to play the villainous Frollo, the evil Minister of Justice who murders Phoebus and places the blame on Esmeralda, Basil Rathbone had to bow out due to conflicting schedules. Sir Cedric Hardwicke took over the role, and Frollo became a secular character. Walter Hampton was cast as Claude, Frollo's virtuous brother, the Archdeacon.

The addition of sound had prompted the Laughton remake. Technicolor and Cinemascope were the technological advances that enhanced the third major adaptation of Hugo's story, a French version directed by Jean Delannoy in 1956. Delannoy was a European filmmaker who directed such films as *INSPECTOR MAIGRET* and *MOMENT OF TRUTH*, but few of his pictures made it to America. Typically, his film is rarely seen today and unavailable in the U.S. A black-and-white French print, without subtitles, was screened for the Disney staff as reference for their version.

Anthony Quinn was cast in the role of Quasimodo, and the voluptuous Gina Lollobrigida starred as the doomed Esmeralda. In Quinn's book, *One Man Tango*, he relates reading the novel, concerned how to essay the role, while crossing the Atlantic on his way to shoot the film. He brooded over his lack of inspiration for days. One morning he awoke strangely free of worry. "It was as if Quasimodo had come to me during the night, fully realized," he wrote.

But looking in a mirror he was shocked. "My deliberate obsession with playing a monster had manifested itself on my body," he says. "To everyone else, it looked like a dreadful rash or facial condition, but I knew better".

Quinn's shifting condition panicked the makeup staff, who were unable to maintain daily continuity. The producers talked of replacing him, but Lollobrigida refused to work with anyone else. Specialists were called in, and, finally, after several weeks, Quinn was directed to an old doctor on a Paris side street.

After questioning the actor, the doctor told him "You wanted to know what it was like to be a monster. Now you know." He told Quinn to wash his face with mineral water and spirit of camphor. He also handed him a book, *The Saviors of God*, by Kazantzakis, and told Quinn to read it. The next day the actor's condition improved and shortly

thereafter he reported to the set. So impressed was Quinn with the author that he called a local bookstore for other titles by Kazantzakis. A clerk recommended *Zorba The Greek*.

Quinn's features are recognizable through the makeup. The film, however, was a disappointment, especially if it was your introduction to the story and you were expecting a horror movie, only to be confronted with an often ponderous drama with a downbeat ending. Although the weakest version to that time, the film did adhere to Hugo's finale: Esmeralda dies! True to the novel, the final scene occurs years later, when the bones of Esmeralda and Quasimodo are found in a burial crypt.

To celebrate their 50th anniversary in 1957, Universal released a bio-pic of Lon Chaney, *MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES*, starring James Cagney. Makeup artist Bud Westmore and his staff changed Cagney into Chaney's creations, including Quasimodo and the Phantom. The major set piece was director Joseph Pevney's recreation of the flogging scene in front of the Universal's original Notre Dame set.

Virtually unseen in the U.S. since its original release, the 1956 French version starred Anthony Quinn (pre-ZORBA THE GREEK) and Gina Lollobrigida.



The character hasn't been ignored by television either. Robert Montgomery Presents produced a version, and Lon Chaney Jr. essayed the role for an episode of *ROUTE 66*. Two film versions were produced for the small screen. In 1976 NBC aired a tape-to-film BBC production directed by Alan Cooke. Warren Clarke starred as Quasimodo with Michelle Newell as Esmeralda. The archdeacon Claude Frollo was played by Kenneth Haigh.

An upscale production was filmed for the Hallmark Hall of Fame in 1982 starring Anthony Hopkins and Lesley-Anne Down as Esmeralda. The version is available through Vidmark Home Entertainment which, inexplicably, has released the film as *HUNCHBACK* although the full title appears on screen.

The impressive cathedral set was erected on the backlot of England's Pinewood Studios. Makeup artist Nick Malley (KRULL) spent ten weeks changing Hopkins into Quasimodo, disguising him with a mop of orange hair, one eye encrusted with vile growths, and the traditional uneven dentures. His studied performance is reminiscent of Laughton's forty years before. Some sequences are direct recreations of those in the RKO version.

One original bow to the novel has Frollo's attempt on Phoebus' life occur in an inn where the Captain of the Guards is about to ravage Esmeralda. The now familiar happy ending has been tagged on, permitting Esmeralda to survive and go off in the arms of Gringoire. Poor Quasimodo isn't as fortunate. Clinging to a gargoyle, the hunchback slips and falls to his death.

TNT has threatened to produce yet another version of the story, but to date production has not been scheduled. □



Quasimodo belts out a tune. Disney has (obviously) used the beauty and the beast theme before, but do audiences want to hear the beast sing?

try to put something in its place that works.”

From the earliest Silly Symphonies, music has been a basic part of the Disney program. The studio has garnered a host of Academy Awards and nominations over the years. For *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* the studio chose the best in the business to compose the music. Alan Menken has won Oscars for *BEAUTY AND*

THE BEAST, *THE LITTLE MERMAID*, and *ALADDIN*. A native of New Rochelle, New York, Menken gained fame when he teamed with the late lyricist Howard Ashman for a musical rendition of Roger Corman's *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*. The team scored again when they provided the music for *LITTLE MERMAID*.

Grammy Award-winner Steven Schwartz, who wrote

the lyrics to last year's *POCAHONTAS*, provided the songs for the new film: "The Bells of Notre Dame;" "Out There," which expresses Quasimodo's longing to visit the world beyond his bell tower home; "A Guy Like You," the Gargoyles musical tribute to their friend; "Topsy Turvy;" "God Help the Outcast;" "The Court of Miracles;" and the stirring "Heaven's Light/

Hell's Fire," Quasimodo and Frolo's tributes to Esmeralda—one light and happy, the other dark and threatening.

After a couple of decades of lackluster productions, the animated feature film has undergone a renaissance spurred by the Disney Studio. Hahn feels that it is a result of the coming of age of a new breed of filmmakers. "When you think that Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston and Walt Disney were in their prime, making classics like *SNOW WHITE*, *PINOCCHIO*, and *BAMBI*, they were in their 30s; they were young men. In this generation, you're seeing that second generation of young men and women coming up now who say, 'We can do better. We can step up to the plate and play hardball with the big boys and make better films, tell better stories.' It's frightening because we're compared not only to ourselves but to the Golden Age of Animation back in the '40s. But that's our ambition: that our generation become the best storytellers and artists that we can be." □

After rescuing her from the gallows, Quasimodo shares a quiet moment with Esmeralda in the sanctuary of Notre Dame.





The Doctor is in—in a new made-for-TV movie, that is.

By Robin Brunet

That DOCTOR WHO has continued to be a cult phenomena in the seven years since the demise of the original BBC series is no surprise. The quirky adventures of the time-traveling eccentric, replete with cheezy special effects and goofy histrionics, was destined for posthumous popularity. And as anyone with a pair of foam rubber Spock ears will testify, cult enthusiasm has given birth to several valuable film franchises. With the advent of a two-hour DOCTOR WHO TV-movie scheduled to be aired on the Fox network in May, a new franchise of STAR TREK-like proportions is keenly anticipated by broadcasters.

Who cultists dominated the Vancouver set in February, when young, old, and in-between members of the British press were flown to this remote location to chronicle the good Doctor's resurrection. They proved to be considerably more level-headed than the zealots who haunt conventions, however. Punctuating a mind-boggling exchange of obscure data regarding the BBC classic was the concern that the movie, produced by a self-confessed "DOCTOR WHO nut," will



Paul McGann takes over the Tardis in the Fox TV movie. McGann is the eleventh actor to play the Time Lord (known only as the Doctor).

merely cater to sentimentality. "The trouble with fans is they want everything exactly the same as the original," explained one scribe. "It's the reason they were so upset with the first STAR TREK feature. With remakes, you have to tread a fine line between pleasing fans and using modern resources to make something impressive. Hopefully, the people behind this movie don't give a damn about the

fans."

Philip Segal, the Who nut in question and executive producer of the \$5 million project, has spent the past seven years attempting to make a rattling good sci-fi yarn, period. But he confessed that he is "petrified fans might hate the finished product. The fact is I don't know how to do DOCTOR WHO better than the original series. And yes, my goal is to expand on the mythology rather than give viewers a rehash. And yes, like the first STAR TREK feature, this Who has a new look as well as state of the art effects."

One of the reasons it took so long to mount a new WHO is that, as Jo Wright, the co-executive producer for BBC Worldwide, explained to reporters, "we've been working very hard to get the script just right. We also needed everyone to agree on the casting of the Doctor. Paul has been mine and Philip's choice from Day One, and we were supported in that by Trevor Walton, the senior vice-president in charge of TV films at Fox, who is British."

'Paul' is Paul McGann, the eighth Doctor Who since the series first appeared in November



McGann with Daphne Ashbrook as the latest in a

of 1963. Although Fox lobbied strongly for rock star Sting, McGann, 36, won the role on the strength of his acting credentials, which emphasizes stage and diverse feature work (ALIEN 3, THE THREE MUSKETEERS).

McGann professed to be stunned by his new assignment. "It's just beginning to dawn on me what all this means. Sylvester McCoy [the last actor to play the Doctor on the series] is a friend, so he's told me everything I need to know."

McGann is also a fan of the classic series: "William Hartnell used to terrify me. My favorite villain was the Yeti." And he echoes Segal's sentiments when he muses that "the new film will be loyal to the spirit of past series, but will find fresh appeal too."

Eric Roberts co-stars as a new high-tech running but now defunct BBC series. A Time





In a long line of the Doctor's cohorts, sort of the equivalent of Sherlock Holmes' Dr. Watson.

The concern over WHO's new look, the expansion of the WHO mythology, and hopes for a new audience is inevitable with any project which attempts to resurrect a pop icon. The Vancouver sets are indeed a mind-boggling departure from those of the original. Eric Roberts (RUNAWAY TRAIN) as the Doctor's arch-enemy, the Master, is a high-tech black-leather villain who could have been culled from a big-budget Hollywood fantasy. There is a 24' by 24' green screen on one side of the studio, one of many indications that the Tardis's travels will be considerably more impressive than what BBC visual effects people offered in years past. And when Sylvester McCoy's Doctor metamorphoses into Mc-

Gann's Doctor at the beginning of the story, it will be courtesy of CGI technology.

But these changes are less of the STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE variety and more of the GOLDENEYE mentality, in which new methods of production and storytelling were employed in respect to what made James Bond so appealing in the 1960s.

To wit, the breathtaking interior of the Tardis—a cross between a Roman coliseum, an Elizabethan mansion, and a post-industrial time travel nerve center—is a physical manifestation of the classic Doctor Who character. "Like what they did with Bond in GOLDENEYE, I wanted to take the Doctor back to his roots, and I always thought he belonged in the Ed-

Each black leather incarnation of the Master, a familiar recurring villain from the long-lived series, is every bit as powerful and brilliant as the Doctor himself.



TARDIS TRAINING

"It's just dawning on me what all this means," said Paul McGann of the role. "Sylvester McCoy [the previous Doctor Who] is a friend so he's told me everything I need to know."

wardian world," reasons Segal. Such rethinking proved to be a treat for Vancouver production designer Richard Hudolin (TIMECOP, STAY TUNED). "Sets like the Tardis control room were a great challenge, showing timelessness while travelling through time," he said. "Plus, it was a lot of work: it took two weeks and 12 people just to put the finishing touches on the sets, for example. Altogether we designed 53 elements—ambitious, considering the \$5 million budget and 12-week shooting schedule."

One of these elements, of course, was the Tardis itself, the blueprints of which Hudolin obtained from the BBC. "Their version was made from fiberglass to withstand a lot of punishment, but ours is made from wood. This is the one thing we slavishly copied from the original series, save for two changes we hope die-hard WHO fans will identify and appreciate."

Because Vancouver is enjoying a wealth of TV and feature projects, the WHO producers' first priority was to find space big enough to contain the Tardis interior, the green screen, a giant cloisters set, and offices; they wound up renting a warehouse on the outskirts of the city. "It may not be a real studio, but it has 24-foot ceilings and columns 40 feet apart," said Hudolin. Banking on the hope there will be more WHO adventures, Hudolin's crew "folded up the Tardis interior and the cloisters set and left them locked up in the warehouse after production wrapped."

The WHO script by Matthew Jabocs (YOUNG INDIANA JONES) is being kept secret, other than the vague disclosure that it revolves around the Master's attempt to destroy the Doctor and the entire universe. Accordingly, visual effects supervisor Tony Dow (who recently co-produced IT CAME FROM

OUTER SPACE TWO for the Sci-Fi pay-TV channel) is reluctant to discuss what he is conjuring during his 10-week post-production stint. He does, however, admit that he and the people at Vancouver's Northwest Imaging & FX are spending considerable time and effort "doing a really nice two-minute opening, which plays under the credits and sets up the story, and shows the Tardis moving through time and space." He also reveals that "we have a cool effect of the universe appearing inside the Tardis control room, and the rejuvenation of the doctor itself, which is basically a motion control shot."

Although there will be about 50 effects shots in the final movie, Dow downplays their importance. "I know this is becoming to sound like a cliché, but we're operating on the assumption less is more. DOCTOR WHO is essentially about one character, and it has a wry, British sense of humour; these

continued on page 62

Sylvester McCoy, last actor to play Dr. Who in the series, puts in a cameo, before transforming into McGann.





TRUE LIES:

Modern myths replace

You've all heard the stories: there's the babysitter who gets a series of threatening phone calls that turn out to originate from within the house, the pet alligator that is flushed down the toilet and grows to a monstrous length in the sewer system, the poodle that explodes when its owner tries to dry it off in the microwave. Chances are that you've told more than a few of these stories yourself. They always happened to a friend of one of your brother's co-workers, or someone similarly detached from your immediate circle of friends, but just close enough to home to make him or her seem real and accessible. And, unless you're a determined skeptic or a trained folklorist, you likely believe, or have at some time believed, that they're absolutely true.

These and other similar tales are what the experts call urban legends, and they are part of our modern folklore, that vast body of shared ideas, inspirations, and common wisdoms which are not written down but which make up the better part of our knowledge as a society. Folklorists call them legends because they are told (and listened to) as if they are true; even if they seem unbelievable upon reflection, we generally suspend our disbelief during their telling, and respond to them as though they were fully credible narratives. They're called urban legends because so many of them seem to have urban settings, although that is not necessarily the case—modern legends might be a better term. Whatever we call them, however, they're basically good stories—good for an evening's entertainment around

the bar or campfire, good for starting conversations at cocktail parties, and maybe even a good way of communicating more important messages about life in general.

Urban legends can be about almost anything, so long as both tellers and listeners can relate it to their own lives. If they have one common characteristic, it's their inherent weirdness; in them, everyday situations spin out of control to become either chaotically loony or, on occasion, downright frightening. At the heart of most urban legend lies a sense of the fragility of our orderly modern lives, the potential for chaos behind the comforting facade of the familiar.

The disruption of the familiar and expected order can have both hilarious and unsettling consequences; indeed, the two often go hand-in-hand. Take the classic urban legend of the "Mexican Pet," in which an American couple acquires an adorable little dog while vacationing south of the border; when they take it to the vet back home, they are informed that their "dog" is really a rat. The story inevitably provokes a few squirms (rats being held in generally low esteem as disease-carrying pests), but the couple's ludicrous error also inspires laughter. The same is true of innumerable other tales, in which the foolish or unlucky objects of our derisive pity experience a variety of humiliations and misfortunes which we, as listeners, believe ourselves wise enough to avoid.

Not surprisingly, these amusing stories often make their way into movies and TV shows. "The Mexican Pet" surfaced in an episode of *THE GOLDEN GIRLS* as one of Rose's interminable "St. Olaf" stories, while another uncomfortably funny legend, concerning a corpse that

Above: *CANDYMAN*, starring Tony Todd and based on Clive Barker's "The Forbidden," feeds the public fascination with urban legends, revealing a growing awareness of the power of folklore in our lives. Below: William Friedkin's *THE GUARDIAN*, with Jenny Seagrove in the title role, is one of several films that explore parents' anxieties about leaving their children home in the care of strangers.



HORROR'S URBAN LEGENDS

ancient superstitions in current terror cinema.

disappears en route from the roof rack of the car which is (incredibly) transporting it to the coroner, appeared in *NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION* (1983). The combination of comedy and creepiness easily lends itself to the sub-genre of horror parody, as in the case of the legendary microwaved poodle, which is played out, with variations, in *MICROWAVE MASSACRE* (1983) and *GREMLINS* (1984). Stories of deadly, rapidly reproducing spiders found lurking in bunches of imported produce at the local grocery inspire the serious (and very tedious) *TARANTULAS: THE DEADLY CARGO* (1977), as well as the much more humorous and entertaining *ARACHNOPHOBIA* (1990). Although originally intended to be taken seriously, South American "killer bee" stories have been played for laughs on *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* and, also, with varying degrees of success, for horror (*THE SAVAGE BEES* in 1976, and 1978's *TERROR OUT OF THE SKY*, *THE BEES* and *THE SWARM*).

These tales of insect invasion illustrate two important characteristics of urban legend: First, they are always topical, reflecting the real-life concerns current in society (the "bee" films and TV sketches virtually all occur within a three-year period, after which the legends and their media counterparts, along with society's killer bee hysteria, suddenly die out). Second, they are inherently ambiguous—funny/terrible, realistic/outrageous; they recognize the realities of our fears while providing a release from their stresses.

There are, however, categories of urban legends which are inherently unfunny and whose intended effect is pure shock or terror. Like the more

humorous stories, their presence in television and cinema guarantees audience recognition and involvement, and their natural domain is, of course, the horror film.

Horror movies have always relied heavily on folklore. *FRANKENSTEIN* (and modern variants like *BLADE RUNNER*) have roots in Classical myth, as Mary Shelley pointedly observed when she subtitled her novel "The Modern Prometheus." *Dracula* is based on European legend, as are stories of werewolves (including modern "werewolves" like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*). Witches, Satanic or otherwise, demonic possessions, and apocalyptic scenarios are all linked to religious mythologies. While these horrors address our primordial fears of the supernatural, urban legends pack the added punch of attacking us, literally, where we live. They speak of the profound uncertainties of modern life, and their horrors are credible because they require no supernatural explanations. Here the true monsters are always human, and the evils described are scarcely more horrific than yesterday's headlines.

The reigning villain of urban legend horror is the psychotic killer. Most often, he escapes from an asylum to terrorize town and countryside, providing, along with the thrills, a call for vigilance and caution. In the classic legend of "The Hook," teenagers parked on lovers' lane hear a radio broadcast which tells of an escaped killer who can be easily recognized by the prosthetic hook which replaces one of his hands. Spooked by the warning, the couple speeds

home; when the boyfriend comes round to open the passenger door, he finds a bloody hook caught on the handle. A variant of this story has the boyfriend leaving to find a gas station; when he fails to return, his girlfriend spends the entire night locked in the car, cowering at the mysterious sound of scratching on the roof. She is found at dawn by the police, along with her murdered boyfriend, who has been left dangling from a tree branch above the car.

These legends are reflected in the plots of dozens of "teen slasher" films, in which countless couples are attacked in the midst of their illicit romantic trysts by homicidal maniacs. Their bodies are then found by their surviving friends, usually displayed in grotesque positions. *HALLOWEEN*, *MY BLOODY VALENTINE*, *SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE*, *FRI-DAY THE 13TH* and the like all vie to present bloodier and more innovative variants of these basic legends, but they have in common a dependence on audience awareness of the "true" stories from which they are derived.

Although "the Hook" and similar tales have become so well-known that they are now generally accepted to be legendary, there are other, less familiar psycho stories which are still often taken to be true. One concerns the woman driver pursued by a car whose male driver appears to be making threatening gestures (or, alternatively, she is pulled away from her car and into a gas station by the service attendant). It turns out that her "assailant" is really a

guardian angel, who has spotted a man lurking in her back seat and wishes to alert her to the danger. The episode appears in the horror anthology *NIGHTMARES*, as well as the television drama *HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREET*, where its potential truth has an appropriately chilling documentary effect.

There is a more specific and direct correspondence between horror movies and the urban legends concerning babysitters. I can distinctly remember, as a teenager, hearing the story of the babysitter who receives a series of threatening phone calls. When she notifies the police, they agree to trace the next call. It turns out, of course, that the caller, a homicidal maniac (naturally), is phoning from another line in the same house. Never having heard of urban legends back then, I believed every word of it (it was supposed to have actually happened to a friend's sister's cousin in a neighboring city—a "friend of a friend," or "FOAF," as the folklorists say). My friends and I refused to babysit alone for months afterwards. Years later, older and much more skeptical, I went to see *BLACK CHRISTMAS* (a.k.a. *STRANGER IN THE HOUSE*). The fact that I no longer believed in the legend in no way interfered with my enjoyment of the movie, which recalled for me all the delicious shock of that first telling. I was even more delighted when the legend was retold in something more like its original form in *WHEN A STRANGER CALLS*, and my subsequent discovery of films like *HE'S IN THE HOUSE*, *HIDER IN THE HOUSE*, and *ARE YOU IN THE HOUSE ALONE?* has allowed me to relive the adolescent terror time and time again. My response admittedly has lit-

BY PATRICIA MOIR

URBAN LEGENDS REVIEW

A folklorist's view of the CANDYMAN sequel.

CANDYMAN: FAREWELL TO THE FLESH

A Gramercy Pictures release of a Propaganda Films production. Director: Bill Condon. Executive producer: Clive Barker. Producers: Sigurjon Sighvatsson & Gregg D. Fienberg. Director of photography: Tobias Schilesaler. Editor: Virginia Katz. Production designer: Barry Robinson. Art director: Dawn Snyder Stebler. Sound: Walter Hoyman. Music: Phillip Glass. Screenplay by Rand Ravich & Mark Kruger based on a story by Clive Barker. 3/95. 94 mins, rated R.

Daniel Robitaille	.....	Tony Todd
Annie Tarrant	.....	Kelly Rowan
Paul McKeever	.....	Timothy Carhart
Octavia Tarrant	.....	Veronica Cartwright
Ehtan Tarrant	.....	William O'Leary
Pam Carver	.....	Fay Hauser
Reverend Ellis	.....	Bill Nunn

by Patricia Moir

In the relatively short time since the first CANDYMAN movie appeared in theaters, the titular character's name has become almost as well known as those of the modern legendary characters that inspired his creators. For years, adolescents have frightened themselves with dares involving "Mary Worth" (no relation to the old comic strip) or "Bloody Mary," who supposedly can be conjured up by repeating her name three times while looking into a mirror in a dim room. Once invoked, this specter wreaks bloody havoc, or so the legends say. It's a rare and unusually skeptical 12-year-old who can be goaded into completing the invocation.

CANDYMAN is based on a short story, "The Forbidden," by Clive Barker. Barker explores the nature of urban folklore—graffiti, rumors—and suggests that we disbelieve folk wisdom at our peril. While he does not refer directly to "Mary Worth," he does mention other urban legends, contrasting the rational, analytical views of the academic folklorist with those of a populace whose beliefs stem from darker, more primitive roots. The film elaborates on this theme, beginning with an aerial shot of a modern city accompanied by the eerie ritualistic chanting of the Philip Glass score. The scene shifts to an office at the university, the high church of scientific faith, where a young woman is telling a variant of the "Mary Worth" story described above. This tale leads her listener, Helen, an ambitious researcher, to the legend's source in Chicago's housing projects, where her scholarly insights prove inadequate to explain the phenomena she encounters. The dark tenements are the hidden face of the city she has never really known; rational rules do not apply, and reality and legend are indistinguishable. The primitive face behind the mask of civilization is gradually revealed, and, to her horror, it turns out to be her own.

Urban legends are, of course, the reflections of our irrational intuitions, anxieties and wishes, so it should come as no surprise that the



Annie Tarrant (Kelly Rowan) is a young teacher who utters the Candyman's (Tony Todd) name once too often in CANDYMAN: FAREWELL TO THE FLESH.

monster is symbolically released through a superstitious ritual confrontation before a mirror. What is amazing is the elegant, multi-layered weaving of this legendary motif throughout the film. Helen's identification with "the dark side" is established long before she realizes what is happening to her. Her house is a mirror-image of those in the projects, and she, too, is trapped in a kind of academic "ghetto" ruled by white, middle-class, male scholars. The Candyman, reputedly the ghost of a former slave who was murdered for holding aspirations beyond his "place," is a vengeful deity well-suited to the residents of the projects and to Helen herself. Do the ghetto occupants "start attributing the horrors of their everyday lives to a mythical figure," or do the horrors of reality arise out of some hidden side of civilized man? Whether the Candyman is really a ghost or merely the creation of the collective faith of his underprivileged believers is never established; nor is it important. It is the ambiguity that resonates with us, long after the film is over. Civilized or not, we need our legends, our rituals, our demons; "the good can only gain understanding from the excesses of evil."

CANDYMAN II: FAREWELL TO THE FLESH is less a sequel than a retelling, a variant on the original film, just as "The Candyman" is a variant of "Mary Worth." Here, the Candyman is clearly the ghost of murdered slave Daniel Robitaille, who appears in 20th-century New Orleans to haunt his descendants, further reinforcing the connection between monster and victims as established in the first film. Once again, the civilized world of the 20th century is contrasted with the primitive realm

of legendary, arcane knowledge. The story is set amidst the pagan madness of New Orleans' Mardi Gras carnival ("carnival" means "farewell to the flesh," and Mardi Gras is the last abandoned celebration of physical pleasures before the abstinence of Lent). Hidden realities are revealed, as "civilized" illusions, deceptions, and concealments are stripped away. Images of mirrors and hidden places are once again significant. The abandoned slaves' quarters are a grim reminder of the past behind the classically graceful manor house, caches of African artifacts are secreted away behind innocuous storefronts, shrines to the Candyman are constructed in attics and closets; like the carnality of Mardi Gras, they are usually covered by a "civilized" (in this case white, western, Christian) exterior. Balance can only be restored by an act of atonement for the sins of the

past, in a ritual laying to rest of the Candyman's tortured, revenge-driven ghost. Mardi Gras comes to an end, ashes to ashes.

CANDYMAN II is remarkable for working simultaneously on two levels: the spiritual/psychological and the historical. The former is, perhaps, slightly less effective than it was in the first film. Much more affecting and memorable is the parallel drawn between the story of the Candyman and the history of Black-White conflicts in the United States, the symbolic evocation of generations of racial violence and repression that still lie explosively close to the surface of American society. If the dominant question posed by Candyman was "what is real?" then the prevailing issue in CANDYMAN II is "what is civilized?"

The question raised by both films is, inevitably, "what is legend?" While their commercial origins technically disqualify all movies from that category, the CANDYMAN films have blurred the distinctions. Derived from genuine urban legends, they transformed serious contemporary issues into symbolic narratives that have, in turn, been fed back into the popular culture, where they are now transforming the very legends from which they arose. This is not an entirely unprecedented occurrence; Walt Disney, for example, has had an enormous impact on the content of the oral narratives we tell our children ever since Snow White. However, it is a uniquely 20th-century phenomenon, one which is increasing in proportion to the complexity of our modes of communication. The example of the CANDYMAN movies may provide some clue to the future relationship between traditional folklore and the popular media. □

tle to do with the quality of the films themselves (although Olivia Hussey in *CHRISTMAS* and Carol Kane in *STRANGER* are as convincing a pair of victims as I've ever seen). It is the link with my own experience that allows me to view these pictures with the uncritical and credulous attention of my own 13-year-old self.

Related to the murdered babysitter legends are the stories of killer babysitters. These cautionary tales tell of children who are neglected/murdered/cooked/eaten by crazy and/or drug-addled babysitters. (The all-time classic, the most famous variant of which originated in the psychedelic '60s, has a hippie teenager hallucinating on LSD and popping the baby into the oven in the belief that she is cooking a turkey.) Unlike the other babysitter stories, these legends are aimed primarily at parents and directly address their anxieties about leaving their children in the care of strangers. Scary babysitters are not new to the cinema—Marilyn Monroe played a mentally disturbed, murderous hotel babysitter in *DON'T BOTHER TO KNOCK* (1952)—but recent years seem to have brought a deluge of similar stories, including *THE BABYSITTER* (1980), *THE GUARDIAN* (1990), and *THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE* (1992). The current popularity of such films is no doubt due to the demographic shift in audiences as baby-boomers become parents and are, apparently, willing to pay to have their worst nightmares confirmed.

On a completely different tack, there is the legend of the psychotic family which lies in ambush to kill (and often eat) passing travellers. Tobe Hooper fused the legend of the cannibal tribe (the tale of which appears to date back at least as far as 18th-century England) with the real-life story of serial killer Ed Gein in *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*, going so far as to introduce the film with the "this is a true story" framing device typical of urban legend performance. Other movies, notably Wes Craven's *THE HILLS HAVE EYES*, soon followed suit. Oddly enough, given its taboo subject matter (or

“I distinctly remember hearing the story of the babysitter who receives a series of threatening phone calls from a homicidal maniac. I believed every word.”



Fred Walton directs Carol Kane in *WHEN A STRANGER CALLS*, one of many films based on the legend. The caller, of course, turns out to be in the house.

perhaps because of it), the cannibal tribe story has worked very successfully as comedy, creating a distinct sub-genre of movies like *MOTEL HELL*, *BLOOD DINER*, and *EATING RAOUL*, as well as the *TEXAS CHAINSAW* sequels. The uncomfortable "joke" here lies in the purveying of the victims as food for unsuspecting customers, *a la* Sweeney Todd. Consumers beware.

The eating of food contaminated by human flesh, intentionally or otherwise, is also a common theme of horror movies (*SOYLENT GREEN*, *ROCKY HORROR*), and appears to be linked to the public's general anxiety about consuming something disgusting or dangerous. Remember the rumor that made the rounds a few years ago, about the Pop Rocks candy which would supposedly make your stomach explode? Or the one about the bubble-gum whose elasticity was due to the spiders' eggs in their list of in-

gredients? Or the diet pills that contained tapeworms? Urban legends, every one, and persistent ones at that—the manufacturers of Pop Rocks eventually gave up trying to convince consumers that their products were safe to eat and pulled them off the market for a while to give the rumors time to die down. One legend tells of a couple who ask the waiter at a Chinese restaurant if their dog can be given a bowl of water; misunderstanding their instructions, he removes the dog and returns a little later with their pet—served up as the main course. The scenario has worked to great effect in the movies, from *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?* on.

The themes of most of the stories mentioned above are no doubt well-known to moviegoers and readers alike, and most of us probably already recognize them for what they are—fictional, didactic folktales. This current public awareness

of modern folklore, and of urban legends in particular, is due largely to the efforts of eminent folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand, whose collections *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*, *The Choking Doberman*, *The Mexican Pet*, *The Baby Train*, and *Curses! Broiled Again* have made the uncommon leap from academic circles to a more mainstream reading audience. Brunvand's books, the products of years of field research, appeal to a broader readership as collections of familiar adult anecdotes; in fact, many of the stories in his later books have been contributed by enthusiastic readers. Urban legend collecting has become a popular hobby, as evidenced by the literally thousands of items now being shared on the Internet (if you're interested, check out alt.folklore.urban). Rather than diminishing the effect of urban legend, whether it be orally narrated or viewed on film or video, this audience sophistication has increased the popular fascination with modern folklore. While commercial films cannot rightly claim to be folklore, they do, in the words of folklorist Larry Danielson, "intensify the transmission of traditional narrative with vivid visual images;" they have become repositories of our fund of common wisdom, "forcibly reminding us of the roles modern media play in the re-animation, intensification, and distribution of folk narrative."

The public fascination with urban legend reveals a growing awareness of the power and presence of folklore in our everyday lives, and of its potential to instruct, entertain, and guide us through the mazes of the modern world. Small wonder that Clive Barker's short story, "The Forbidden," should achieve such success in the film *CANDYMAN* and its recent sequel. Both of these films deal with the potency of legends, confirming their validity in a world whose realities so often test rational explanations. In the words of the Candyman himself, urban legends will continue to "frighten children and make lovers cling closer in their rapture," filling our deepest need for "something to be haunted by." □

THE ARRIVAL

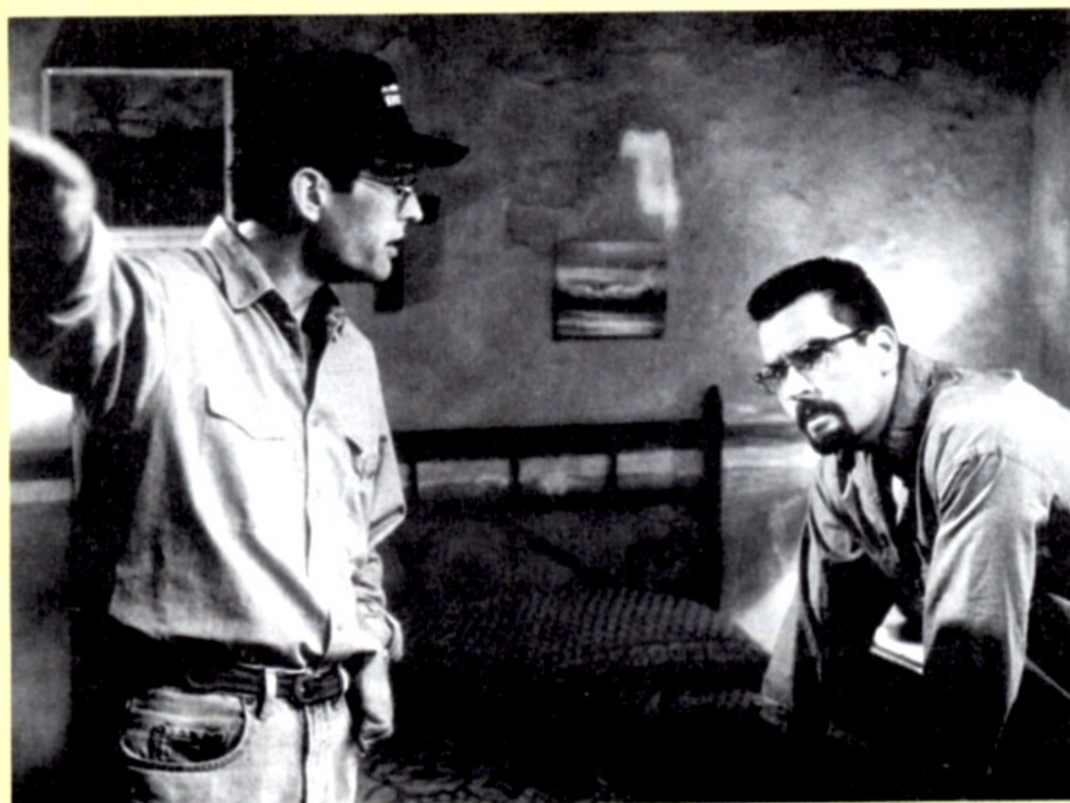
Science fiction scribe David Twohy directs an alien invasion of Earth.

By Alan Jones

Add another "Alien Invasion" movie to the ever-growing list that already includes *INDEPENDENCE DAY*, *MARS ATTACKS!* and *STARSHIP TROOPERS*. It's *THE ARRIVAL* (filmed under the title *SHOCKWAVE*), a \$26 million LIVE Entertainment production, which Orion Pictures will release in May. Written and directed by David Twohy, *THE ARRIVAL*, starring Charlie Sheen, Ron Silver, Lindsay Crouse, and Teri Polo, could almost be a combination of Twohy's previous two scripts, *THE FUGITIVE* and *WATERWORLD*.

Sheen plays renegade scientist Zane Zaninski who intercepts not only a radio signal from extraterrestrial life in space but also a response from the Earth broadcast back into the galaxy signifying that the aliens are already here. What they've actually been doing for the past two decades, from their secret subterranean base deep in the Yucatan Jungle, is slowly heating up our planet for their needs. Once Earth reaches the desired temperature, the creatures will migrate en masse from their own rapidly dying world. And you thought global warming was all our fault! Naturally, no one believes Zaninski's conspiracy theory while he struggles to stay one step ahead of alien capture.

Produced by James Steele and Thomas Smith, *THE ARRIVAL* was shot on location in Mexico and Los Angeles in the latter part of 1995, and marks the second time scripter Twohy has stepped behind the camera. He directed the Showtime cable movie *THE GRAND TOUR: DISASTER IN TIME*, which was theatrically released outside North America and won the Grand Prix at the 1992 Brussels Fantasy Film Festival. About his latest science fiction seat-edged



David Twohy, who wrote the Charlie Sheen vehicle *TERMINAL VELOCITY*, directs Charlie Sheen in *THE ARRIVAL*, which was filmed as *SHOCKWAVE*.

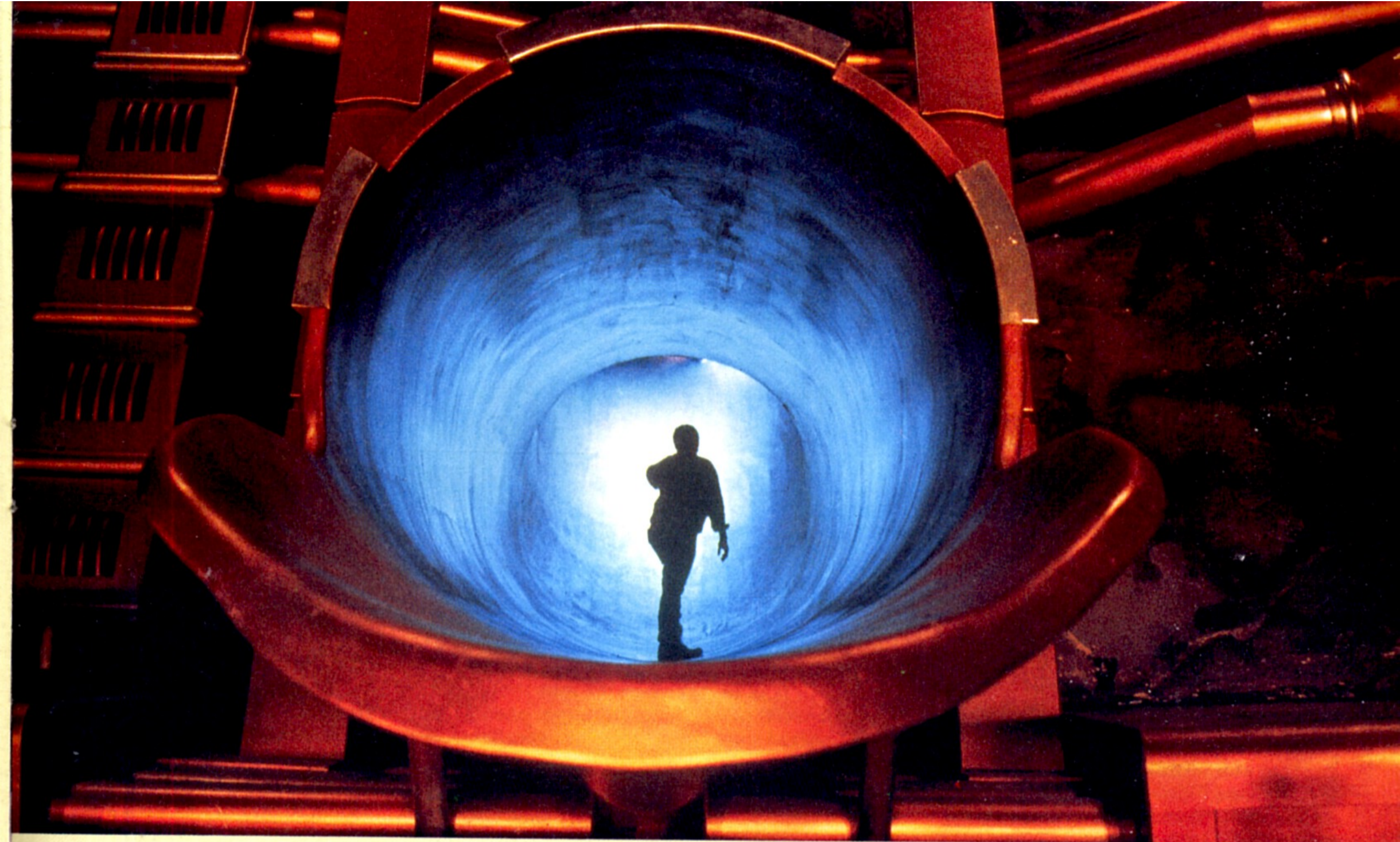
suspenser Twohy remarked, "People have asked me if this is a prequel to *WATERWORLD*. I must state categorically that it's not, although both do share a haunting thematic similarity. *THE ARRIVAL* deals with global warming; *WATERWORLD* dealt with the consequences of it after the polar ice caps melted. When you do movies on such a grand scale as *THE ARRIVAL*, it's insane not to address important contemporary issues. *THE ARRIVAL* also has a commonality with *THE FUGITIVE*, because both feature men trying to unravel the truth about a situation while being hounded and narrowly escaping capture time after time. One man trying to convince others he's onto something monumental is a classic dilemma and a concept well worth exploring again in a science fiction context."

THE ARRIVAL sprang from Twohy's fertile mind mainly because of his love of science fiction and astronomy. He explained, "H.G. Wells, Robert Heinlein and Harlan Ellison were the formative authors of my youth, and I've always had an interest in astronomy. Historically, people tend

to think of astronomers as people who scan the universe by looking through huge telescopes. That isn't the case anymore. It's done by radio now—scientists listen to the stars rather than look at them. The original title *SHOCKWAVE* referred to the event of receiving a signal from space proving life is out there. Science doesn't have a word for it, so I coined the catchy phrase just for them! I found this idea fascinating and started wondering what would happen when we finally do hear the first signal from space: What will change for mankind? Will it be the best thing to happen or the worst? Then I decided to take it one step further. The aliens are already here and broadcasting back to their home. That seemed a chilling enough premise for a very different screenplay."

And Twohy is determined to make *THE ARRIVAL* as different as possible. He remarked, "There would be no point in making it otherwise! I have a very low threshold for clichés. I want to see things which have never been done before. Prior to writing the screenplay, I compiled a list of really cool stuff I wanted to include, and I'm happy to say most of those story-driven ideas have been incorporated into the finished product. For example, the movie opens on a lush meadow full of poppies and sunlight. Then the camera draws back into space to reveal the field is located in the middle of an arctic wasteland. The audience will ask the question 'Why is it there?' and be instantly gripped."

He continued, "Then there's the OmniTech factory, a huge subterranean terraforming plant built by the aliens under Mexico, where they vaporize the special pellets responsible for heating up the Earth's atmosphere. In the script, I describe



Astronomer Zane Ziminski (a cast-against-type Charlie Sheen) infiltrates the confines of the mysterious Omni Tech factory.

this industrial nightmare as, 'If this isn't Hell, it will do until the real thing comes along!' I'm also sick of seeing explosions in films. So I've done implosions instead with a weird spherical, grenade-like device that suddenly sucks everything inside it when placed in a room. It's the aliens way of house cleaning because everything—wallpaper, even plaster—gets drawn into it. One of the more spectacular sequences is the second time the device is used and a giant radio telescope is reduced to rubble."

Zaminski discovers that OmniTech is a terraforming operation paving the way for an alien invasion.

Aside from these ground-breaking visuals, it's the design of the aliens which Twohy believes will be *THE ARRIVAL*'s strongest selling point. He remarked, "Audiences have seen so many alien creatures now, and I wanted to avoid the man-in-a-rubber-suit option. My thoughts changed rapidly when producer Thomas Smith came on board. As the former head of George Lucas' ILM he has worked on many major special effects pictures, including *E.T.*, the *STAR WARS* trilogy, and *RAIDERS OF THE LOST*

ARK. He let me know that now was the right time to consider a completely digital creature, one created solely by computer graphics. Once I assumed that possibility, then many other things became feasible too, and really I let my imagination soar."

Twohy's unusual design for the extraterrestrial lifeforms are being described as "coppery, black, skinless creatures with their knees bent backwards." One of his more challenging images was of a Skeleton Man in a Mexican "Day of the Dead" parade unlocking his knees and springing to the top of a two-story building. He added, "I made the physical characteristics of the creatures just slightly off from human ones. Our aliens will be seen in great detail and that's a first for this kind of special effects picture. But they aren't malevolent or out to kill. They are doing what must be done in order to survive. I didn't want fangs, drool or slime! These creatures aren't monsters, and they have a certain intelligence and nobility. I'm not making a cheap horror picture. The aliens are in the story for a very valid reason."

He continued, "Okay, it's a story that shocks, taking many twists and turns right up until the very last surprising second. I wrote it to keep the audience guessing. Yet it also has many courageous moments regarding who lives and who dies because I made the plot as real as possible. *THE ARRIVAL* is set here and now. Few science fictions movies are—they either take place in

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HORROR FILMS FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER

An overview of neglected Mexican fantasy

For nearly 60 years, Mexicans have been making monsters south of our border—Mexican filmmakers, that is. While a significant percentage of the more than 5,000 features produced in Mexico since 1930 contain elements of fantasy, most of these films—aside from a handful of dubbed releases in the 1960s and a few recent examples such as LIKE WATER

FOR CHOCOLATE (1993) and CRONOS (1994)—have gone unseen in the United States.

In Mexico, the fantastic is often accepted as just one more aspect of daily life. So it is in Mexican cinema as well: the fantastic is routinely mixed with the real, the supernatural with the mundane. Masked wrestlers combat werewolves and witches; peasants make deals with the Devil; Dracula is befriended by

winos; Aztec mummies fight robots, and so on.

Mexican fantasy films have a good deal to offer viewers. On most films made from the 1940s through the mid-1960s, the direction, editing, photography, and design are excellent—certainly on par with Hollywood studio productions of the period. (Special effects and special effects makeup, on the other hand, never developed to the U.S. level.) Furthermore, the relatively small size of the industry ensures that performers of the first rank appear in even the most bizarre and outlandish fantasy films—few Mexican actors are “above” working in the genre. And Mexican fantasy films are rarely dull, often veering from moody, atmospheric scenes to comic book style action within a single film. There is no hesitation about employing outrageous themes and wild plots, lending the films a vitality often missing in genre productions from other nations.

Mexico’s silent film industry was negligible. Sound films began to be produced in 1930, although in relatively small numbers (averaging only 36 films per year over the next 10 years). During the first decade of sound film production, Mexican filmmakers made only a few outright fantasy films, and even fewer pictures which could be classified as “horror” films. Nonetheless, there were some notable exceptions. One of the earliest Mexican fantasy films

was LA LLORONA (THE CRYING WOMAN, 1933), a retelling of a well-known Mexican legend: a scorned woman murders her illegitimate children, or has them taken away from her; she goes mad and eventually commits suicide—or is executed—but her wailing spirit continues to wander the Earth, bringing bad luck and misfortune. “La Llorona,” one of the few truly indigenous Mexican horror characters, would reappear in 1946, 1958, 1959, 1961, and again in 1974 (this time matched against wrestling hero Santo).

In 1934, one of the major directors of early Mexican cinema, Fernando de Fuentes, made EL FANTASMA DEL CONVENTO (THE PHANTOM OF THE CONVENT). The film told of three travelers who take shelter in a remote monastery. There are various supernatural occurrences during the night, and when morning comes, the travelers realize that their hosts were the spectres of the long-dead monks.

Nineteen thirty-six, which saw the beginning of the highly-popular *ranchera* genre, also saw the production of two horror films based on the Hollywood model: EL BAÚL MACABRO (THE MACABRE TRUNK), and EL SUPERLOCO (THE SUPER MADMAN). Both feature mad scientists and monsters in the Frankenstein and Doctor X mode, but were anomalies—few films of this type were made in Mexico until the 1950s. EL BAÚL MACABRO was directed by Miguel Zacarías and featured René Car-



SANTO VS. THE TERROR RIDERS, one of many films to mix wrestling with horror, pitted the masked marvel against villainous lepers!

cinema.

dona in a leading role: Cardona later became a prolific director, and his son and grandson would also follow in his footsteps as actors, then directors.

Director Juan Bustillo Oro—along with de Fuentes, one of the major industry figures of the period—contributed a historical film with fantasy elements in 1936, *NOSTRADAMUS* (which bore no relation to the series of *NOSTRADAMUS* vampire films made in 1959). Previously, he had directed *EL MISTERIO DEL ROSTRO PÁLIDO* (*THE MYSTERY OF THE PALLID FACE*, 1934), a thriller in which a violin-playing ghost is exposed as a leper wearing a mask.

EL SIGNO DE LA MUERTE (*THE SIGN OF DEATH*, 1939) is noteworthy for the presence of comedian Mario Moreno “Cantinflas,” providing comic relief in a basically serious thriller along the lines of *MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM*. The film concerns a madman whose cult practices human sacrifice in a plot to return Mexico to its Aztec roots. Surprising for the period, the film contains a brief bit of nudity and gore. Other fantasy pictures of the pre-war era include *EL MONJE LOCO* (*THE MAD MONK*, 1940), a multi-story film based on a popular radio show of the period (somewhat in the *INNER SANCTUM* and *EC Comics* vein), and *HERENCIA MACABRA* (*MACABRE HERITAGE*, 1939).

While Mexican cinema of the WWII period tended toward contemporary dramas and adaptations of foreign literary

classics, one interesting series of films starred David T. Bamberg, known as Fu Manchu. Bamberg did *not* portray the Sax Rohmer villain—in these films, he plays himself: an Anglo-Saxon stage magician who wears Oriental makeup and garb only as part of his stage act. Most of the Fu Manchu thrillers—such as *EL ESPECTRO DE LA NOVIA* (*THE SPECTRE OF THE BRIDE*, 1943) and *MUSEO DEL CRIMEN* (*MUSE -*

UM OF CRIME, 1944)—have some fantastic elements, although these are usually explained away in conventional terms. *EL ASESINATO EN LOS ESTUDIOS* (*MURDER IN THE STUDIOS*, 1944) contains a “film within a film” sequence: a Hollywood-style horror picture (including a Frankenstein-like monster) is being shot at the same studio where Bamberg is scheduled to make a movie. A murder occurs and

THE AZTEC MUMMY VS. THE HUMAN ROBOT was the third entry in the Mummy series, an attempt to give a Mexican slant to a Universal concept.

Fu steps in to solve it. The concept of a “real-life” character appearing in fictional adventures would later serve as the basis for the popular wrestling-hero genre.

Between 1945 and 1956, a number of films with fantastic content appeared, but most were fantasy-comedies like *UN DIA CON EL DIABLO* (*ONE DAY WITH THE DEVIL*, 1945, with Cantinflas), *EL*



BY

DAVID WILT

SOUTH OF THE BORDER HORROR REVIEW

Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez get lost on the way to El Rey.

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

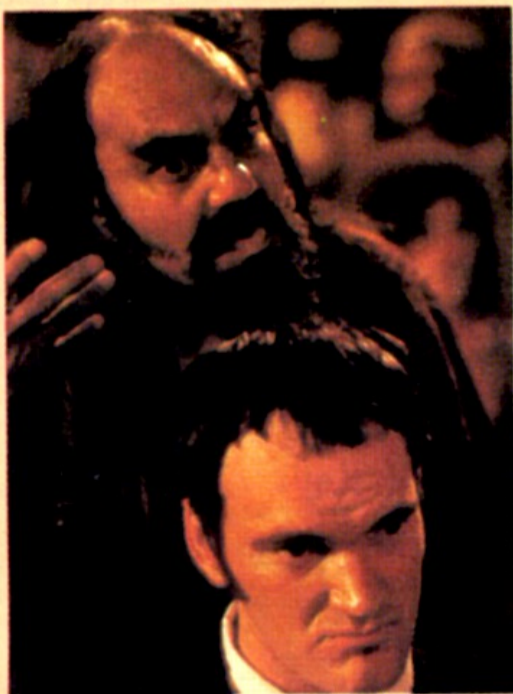
A Dimension Films release from A Band Apart, in association with Los Hooligans Prod./96. 107 mins. R-rated. Director: Robert Rodriguez. Producers: Gianni Nunnari, Meir Teper. Executive producers: Lawrence Bender, Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino. Director of photography: Guillermo Navaro. Editor: Rodriguez. Production designer: Cecilia Montiel. Art director: Mayne Schuyler Berke. Set designer: Collin de Rouin. Special makeup effects: KNB EFX Group. Sound: Mark Uino. Screenplay by Quentin Tarantino, based on a story by Robert Kurtzman.

Jacob Fuller.....	Harvey Keitel
Seth Gecko.....	George Clooney
Richard Gecko.....	Quentin Tarantino
Kate Fuller.....	Juliette Lewis
Border Guard/Chet/Pussy.....	Cheech Marin
Frost.....	Fred Williamson
Santanico Pandemonium.....	Salma Hayek
Sex Machine.....	Tom Savini
FBI Agent Stanley Chase.....	John Saxon

by Steve Biodrowski

It's not easy being God (just ask Eric Clapton). With the success of PULP FICTION, Quentin Tarantino achieved icon status, to the point that it was widely assumed his involvement in this crime-horror hybrid would guarantee blockbuster success. What people forget, however, is that Tarantino has only one blockbuster. Not that artistic achievement should be judged by boxoffice, but it's not a bad idea to remember that his name, on its own,

Tarantino, as psycho-brother Richie, gets a hard time from Cheech Marin as one of the Aztec vampires.



In the film's overdue highlight, a vampire battle royale that erupts an hour into the flick, Tom Savini (as biker Sex Machine) dispatches a fetching vamp.

is not yet a guaranteed franchise. If we needed any proof of that, the disappointing FROM DUSK TILL DAWN certainly provides it. (Okay, it's not a Mexican production, but it is set in Mexico, and director Robert Rodriguez is Mexican, so I can review it here if I want to.)

Tarantino tries to rework the structural ploy from the Bruce Willis section of PULP, in which a story going one direction takes an abrupt and outrageous turn; unfortunately, that gambit can't work in a feature film, when all the trailers and pre-release interviews and have told us that this crime melodrama will end up in a lair of vampires.

The result is that the set up takes too long, because we know what is going to happen. In fact, the killer on the road sequences end up resembling nothing so much as the most overextended first act in screen history. What accounts for this miscalculation? One can only assume that it was to provide more screentime for Tarantino in his co-starring role. Actually, he acquits himself well enough by mostly standing in the

shadow of Clooney, who proves himself an excellent leading man. Still, one can't help wishing that some of that screen time had been devoted to more deserving characters who show up later, such as Hayek's vampire dancer, Santanico Pandemonium, who ends up being destroyed far too soon.

When we finally get to the vampire striptease club south of the Mexican border, the film immediately jumps to life; it's as if Rodriguez, back on his home territory, has finally got a handle on the film. When the first melee occurs, and the characters we have been following find themselves thrust together with a couple of complete strangers (ably played by Williamson and Savini) in a fight for survival, the film briefly realizes some of its full potential. Alas, no sooner is this new group drawing together under adverse conditions, than Tarantino starts dispatching characters left and right, rather than dramatizing the internal conflicts that must inevitably arise under such duress (*a la* NIGHT OF

continued on page 60

QUE MURIÓ DE AMOR (HE WHO DIED OF LOVE, 1945), EL DIABLO NO ES TAN DIABLO (THE DEVIL ISN'T SUCH A DEVIL, 1949), and the prehistoric comedy EL BELLO DURMIENTE (THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, 1952—with Germán Valdés "Tin Tan" as a caveman revived in the 20th century). There were also melodramas and rancheras with fantasy elements, such as EL AHIJADO DEL MUERTE (THE GODSON OF DEATH, 1946), starring Jorge Negrete, LA DAMA DEL ALBA (THE LADY OF THE DAWN, 1949), in which death—a beautiful and mysterious woman—pays a visit to an isolated hacienda, and the musical comedy-ranchera QUÉ LINDO CHA CHA CHA! (WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CHA CHA CHA!, 1954). In the latter film, a demon tries to capture souls in a sleepy provincial town by opening a fancy nightclub and transforming a drab young woman (Ana Bertha Lepe, a former "Miss México") into a devilish vamp.

Juan Bustillo Oro had returned to the fantasy genre in 1945 with LO QUE VA DE AYER A HOY (HE WHO CAME FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY, 1945), a comedy about a man who is revived after 50 years in suspended animation. RETORNO A JUVENTUD (RETURN TO YOUTH, 1953), was his mixture of DON JUAN, FAUST, and THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, designed and shot in Expressionist style. Chano Urueta, the director of EL SIGNO DE LA MUERTE, contributed two more fantasy films: EL MONSTRUO RESUCITADO (THE REVIVED MONSTER, 1953), and LA BRUJA (THE WITCH, 1954).

In the first film, a disfigured scientist revives a corpse and tries to use this monster for revenge, but the zombie (Carlos Navarro—in this film the *monster* is more handsome than his creator!) falls in love with his intended victim (Miroslava) and turns on the doctor, killing him. LA BRUJA is somewhat similar: a scientist remakes a disfigured woman into a beauty, using her to wreak revenge on three men who stole his secret formula and caused his daughter's death.

LADRÓN DE CADÁVERES (BODY SNATCHER, 1956) marks the beginning of the Golden Age of Mexican fantasy cinema. This seminal work would be imitated many times over the next two decades. The film opens with an atmospheric grave-robbing sequence modeled after the beginning of FRANKENSTEIN (1931), and also borrows from HOUSE OF WAX, KING KONG, THE WOLF MAN, and other genre classics. A serial killer is at work in Mexico, murdering athletes and leaving the corpses—their heads shaved and marked for brain surgery—around the city (a well-realized scene depicts a streetwalker's accidental discovery of one such victim on a fog-shrouded street). The culprit is Dr. Ogden (Carlos Riquelme), who is trying to transplant animal brains into human bodies. Ogden finally succeeds using the body of a wrestler and the brain of a gorilla, but his creation (Wolf Ruvinskis, wearing an interesting series of progressive makeups) goes berserk in the ring, then kills Ogden (impaling him on a coat hook) and kidnaps the film's heroine, before finally succumbing to police bullets.

This mixture of wrestling, science fiction, and horror would reach its peak during the 1960s, including two semi-remakes of LADRÓN DE CADÁVERES: 1962's LAS LUCHADORAS VS. EL MÉDICO ASESINO (THE WRESTLING WOMEN VS. THE KILLER DOCTOR) and 1968's EL HORRIPILANTE BESTIA HUMANA (THE HORRIFYING HUMAN BEAST, a.k.a. NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES). However, the next Mexican fantasy film to achieve great success was the more traditional EL VAMPIRO (THE VAMPIRE, 1957).

Directed by Fernando Méndez and produced by Abel Salazar (who also portrayed the hero), the film introduced Germán Robles as the sinister Count Lavud, who transfers his vampiric activities to Mexico from the Balkans. After a sequel in 1957 (EL ATAÚD DEL VAMPIRO—THE VAMPIRE'S COFFIN), a cameo in a comedy (EL CASTILLO DE LOS

The small size of the industry ensures that performers of the first rank appear in even the most bizarre fantasy films. Few actors are "above" the genre.



German Robles became the Christopher Lee of Mexico, beginning with his performance as Count Lavud in THE VAMPIRE (1957).

MONSTRUOS [THE CASTLE OF THE MONSTERS], also 1957), and the lead in the NOSTRADAMUS features, Robles turned in his fangs. Salazar replaced him with Guillermo Murray in EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS (THE WORLD OF THE VAMPIRES, 1960), as Count Subotai, a vampire who plays a pipe organ made of human skeletons.

EL VAMPIRO, like LADRÓN DE CADÁVERES, was successful at home and abroad (French critics, especially, liked both pictures), inspiring other filmmakers to follow suit. Horror and fantasy films began to appear more frequently, averaging slightly more than 10 a year over the next decade. The films ranged from supernatural stories (MISTERIOS DE LA MAGIA NEGRA—MYSTERIES OF BLACK MAGIC) to Fu Man-

chu-style thrillers with science-fiction and fantasy overtones (DR. SATÁN), and featured vampires, witches, werewolves, demons, zombies, mummies, aliens, mad scientists, as well as some Mexican creations like "La Llorona."

Among the more interesting features produced during this horror boom were MISTERIOS DE ULTRATUMBA [MYSTERIES BEYOND THE GRAVE, a.k.a. BLACK PIT OF DR. M], 1958) and the deliriously bizarre EL BARÓN DEL TERROR (THE BARON OF TERROR, 1961—dubbed as THE BRAINIAC). MISTERIOS DE ULTRATUMBA, directed by Fernando Méndez, features sets designed by Gunther Gerszo (also responsible for the art direction of EL VAMPIRO, and later a respected modern artist) and a moody

musical score by Gustavo César Carrión; the plot concerns a scientist who tries to prove the existence of life after death by summoning up the spirit of a recently-deceased colleague (with predictably dire results).

EL BARÓN DEL TERROR stars Abel Salazar (after all, he owned the production company) as a heretic killed by the Inquisition in 1661; he returns to Earth 300 years later as a big-headed, fork-tongued, brain-sucking monster (sometimes snacking on human brains he stores in an urn). Directed by Chano Urueta—who also made Westerns and comedies but seemed to excel at his fantasy-film work—the film is as weird and outlandish as Méndez's MISTERIOS DE ULTRATUMBA is restrained and moody.

Another notable film of the period is LA CASA DEL TERROR (THE HOUSE OF TERROR, 1960), the only Mexican film appearance of Lon Chaney Jr. Chaney has no dialogue as a mummy who is revived by a mad doctor and then turns into a werewolf! Although the original film was a comedy, the rather impressive lab and monster scenes were—together with some AZTEC MUMMY footage—combined with new U.S.-shot sequences and released in the United States as FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF (1965).

Other films of the horror boom worth mentioning include the three AZTEC MUMMY features (actually shot before EL VAMPIRO in 1957), EL ESPEJO DE LA BRUJA (THE WITCH'S MIRROR, 1960), EL HOMBRE Y EL MONSTRUO (THE MAN AND THE MONSTER, 1958), EL VAMPIRO SANGRIENTO (THE BLOODY VAMPIRE, 1962) and its sequel, EL INVASIÓN DE LOS VAMPIROS (THE INVASION OF THE VAMPIRES), MUNECOS INFERNALES (INFERNAL DOLLS, 1961), and LA LOBA (THE SHE-WOLF, 1964). It is interesting to note that these films were made at different studios, by different directors, and without any specialized group of "horror" actors. Though not every Mexican film of the period is outstanding, many are surprisingly good entertainment.

Those who are familiar only with the dubbed versions may appreciate the films' physical look and have a general idea of the plots, but in virtually every case dubbing seriously detracts from the overall impact.

The establishment of the América studios in 1957 opened up feature production to STIC, a union previously allowed only to make shorts and newsreels (features were the exclusive province of the STPC union, based at the Churubusco-Azteca studios). STIC personnel began to produce "series episodes" (about 30 minutes in length), which were then spliced together into full-length films. Contrary to some English-language sources, which describe the films as features edited from "serials," the vast majority of these "episodes" were *never* shown separately, either on TV or elsewhere, and were not intended to stand alone. They were made in this format solely to circumvent the prohibition against STIC-made features.

Most of the América films during the facility's first decade were Westerns, wrestling stories, and fantasies (or combinations of all three), their release chiefly restricted to lower-class theatres. The NOSTRADAMUS series of four features (a total of 12 "episodes")—shot in 1959 and released over the next four years—was later dubbed into English for U.S. TV. Germán Robles had the title role, as a vampiric descendant of the original Nostradamus; he was opposed by vampire-hunters Domingo Soler and Julio Alemán. Other notable América productions were the "Neutron" features (three in 1960 and two more in 1964), ORLAK, EL INFIERNO DE FRANKENSTEIN (ORLAK, THE HELL OF FRANKENSTEIN [sic], 1960), and the linked films ROSTRO INFERNAL (HELL FACE) and LA HUELLA MACABRA (THE MACABRE MARK) both in 1962.

The wrestling-hero genre began in earnest in the early 1960s, adding even more films to the growing total of fantasy product. The most popular hero was El Santo (Rodolfo Guzmán Huerta). Virtually all of this charac-

Mexican fantasy films from the '40s and the '60s are on par with Hollywood productions of the period, although makeup and effects never reached U.S. levels.



Actress Kitty de Yeyos dons werewolf makeup for the title role in the 1964 effort *THE SHE WOLF*, a film which also features a wolf man.

ter's 50 starring films contain *some* fantastic elements. Noteworthy titles include *SANTO VS. LAS MUJERES VAMPIROS* (*SANTO VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN*, 1962), the ludicrous but entertaining *PROFANDORES DE TUMBAS* (*GRAVE ROBBERS*, 1965)—in which Santo battles a killer lampshade and a killer wig(!)—and the slick *SANTO Y EL DEMONIO AZUL CONTRA DRÁCULA Y EL HOMBRE LOBO* (*SANTO AND THE BLUE DEMON VS. DRACULA AND THE WOLF MAN*, 1972). The latter film features Aldo Monti as Dracula, a role he had previously played in, 1968's *SANTO Y EL TESORO DE DRÁCULA* (*SANTO AND THE TREASURE OF DRACULA*). The Silver Masked One also faced off against Martians, Dr. Frankenstein, Frankenstein's daughter, other mad scientists, a giant blob from outer space, mum-

mies, zombies, witches, and many more supernatural menaces over the course of his long career.

Among Santo's rivals, Blue Demon and Mil Máscaras were the most durable. Like Santo, most of Blue Demon's starring films contain fantasy elements. *BLUE DEMON—EL DEMONIO AZUL* (1964) and *EL DEMONIO AZUL VS. EL PODER SATÁNICO* (*BLUE DEMON VS. THE SATANIC POWER*, 1964), his first two vehicles, are cheap black-and-white efforts shot mostly on location. This makes the films look older than they are but also imparts an undeniably eerie atmosphere that is missing from later color adventures such as *EL DEMONIO AZUL CONTRA LOS CEREBROS INFERNALES* (*BLUE DEMON VS. THE INFERNAL BRAINS*, 1966). *LA SOMBRA DEL MURCIÉLAGO* (*THE SHADOW OF THE BAT*, 1966) was a remake of

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, featuring Fernando Osés as a scarred, organ-playing professional wrestler who meets his match in the Blue Demon.

As time went on, the wrestling-heroes began to band together. Santo and Blue Demon made eight pictures together (Santo also had a cameo in *EL PODER SATÁNICO*), and many early '70s films have the appearance of superhero conventions: five wrestlers (including Blue Demon) fought alien midgets in *LOS CAMPEONES JUSTICIEROS* (*THE CHAMPION JUSTICE-FIGHTERS*, 1970), and second-rank wrestlers "Superzan," and "Tinieblas" teamed up in *LOS VAMPIROS DE COYOACÁN* (1973) and were joined by "Blue Angel" in *EL CASTILLO DE LAS MOMIAS DE GUANAJATO* (*THE CASTLE OF THE MUMMIES OF GUANAJATO*, 1972).

Mil Máscaras was the protagonist of *LAS VAMPIRAS* (*THE VAMPIRE WOMEN*, 1968), one of four films John Carradine made for Fílmica Vergara in the late 1960s (Carradine had also appeared, with Basil Rathbone and Cameron Mitchell, in the all-star fantasy-comedy *AUTOPSIA DE UN FANTASMA* (*AUTOPSY OF A GHOST*, 1966). Boris Karloff also made four films for Vergara (although the aging star's scenes were all shot at the Dored Studios in Los Angeles), and these Mexican efforts are available in English-language versions. The quality of these films varies widely, as does the amount of footage allotted to the American stars. *LA MUERTE VIVIENTE* (aka *THE SNAKE PEOPLE*, 1968) is probably the best of the Karloff quartet, and the boring *SERENATA MACABRA* is the worst, although Karloff has less screen time in *LA CÁMARA DE TERROR*. *LAS VAMPIRAS* is probably the most entertaining Carradine Mexican film; *PACTO DE MUERTE*, an updated version of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, is the least interesting, especially since Carradine appears only briefly at the beginning and end of the film (Puerto Rican actor Miguel Angel Alvarez portrays Carradine's char-

acter at a younger age, and is the film's protagonist).

Most Mexican fantasy films from *EL VAMPIRO* onward were popular genre product, as opposed to "prestige" films. *MACARIO* (1959), and *PEDRO PARAMO* (1966) were two exceptions. The latter film, an unusual early-1900s rural drama with fantasy overtones, adapted from a novel by Juan Rulfo, was handicapped from the start by the casting of John Gavin in the lead. While Gavin—later U.S. ambassador to Mexico during the Reagan presidency—performed adequately, his presence predisposed many Mexican critics to dislike the film from the outset. *MACARIO*, based on a story by B. Traven (author of *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*) and starring Ignacio López Tarso, is an interesting albeit mildly pretentious film about a poor Mexican's encounters with God (José Luis Jiménez) and the Devil (Juan Gálvez), and his deal with Death (Enrique Lucero).

Non-wrestling fantasy films decreased somewhat as the 1960s went on, although there were a few interesting efforts. *EL IMPERIO DE DRÁCULA* (*THE EMPIRE OF DRACULA*, 1966) and *LA ENDEMONIADA* (*THE POSSESSED ONE*, 1967) clearly illustrate the influence of Hammer and European horror on Mexican filmmakers (as early as *LA MALDICIÓN DE LA LLORONA* [*THE CURSE OF THE CRYING WOMAN*, 1961] there is a scene closely modeled after one in *BLACK SUNDAY*). *EL IMPERIO DE DRÁCULA* combines a number of Hammer elements—including the gory vampire-resuscitation from *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*—in its tale of the predatory "Count Dracula" (Eric del Castillo). *EL ENDEMONIADA* stars the often-nude Argentine actress Libertad Leblanc as a revived sorceress (with a vampire sidekick played by Enrique Rocha) and borrows quite heavily from Mario Bava's *BLACK SUNDAY*. *EL ESCAPULARIO* (*THE SCAPULAR*, 1966), an independently-made film directed by Servando González with superb photography by Gabriel Figueroa, is another

SOUTH OF THE BORDER HORROR

HOW TO FIND IT

Dubbing seldom does justice; Spanish language video and TV are your best bet.

One reason Mexican cinema is not widely known in the United States is the relatively small number of films which have been subtitled or dubbed into English. Ironically, probably more horror and fantasy films than any other Mexican genre have made the crossover, although they do not necessarily represent the best examples of the genre.

In the 1960s, K. Gordon Murray produced the English-language versions of a number of Mexican films. While the dubbing leaves something to be desired, few cuts were made in the films themselves, and as a result Murray's versions are often fairly close approximations of the originals. Some of these are still available from discount video distributors, while others occasionally show up on television (such as Murray's biggest money-maker, *SANTA CLAUS*).

The "Nostradamus" and "Neutron" series were also dubbed into English for television. Surprisingly, most of the Santo films have not been dubbed or subtitled, although occasionally a TV print will surface of *SAMSON VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN* or *INVASION OF THE ZOMBIES*.

While Murray and his contemporaries generally confined their activities to dubbing, at the other extreme was Jerry Warren, who intercut Mexican footage (sometimes using a narrator but doing little dubbing) with new scenes shot in the U.S. films like *FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF* and *CREATURE OF THE WALKING DEAD* are neither fair indicators of the quality of the original films, nor good entertainment on their own.

More recently, dubbed versions of Boris Karloff's Mexican films have emerged on videotape (for years, *THE SNAKE PEOPLE* was the only easily-accessible title), but the same cannot be said for John Carradine's quartet for the same producer. The dubbed *NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES*



A zombie henchman from *MYSTERIES OF BLACK MAGIC*, one of the many atmospheric Mexican horror films seldom seen this side of the border.

[*EL HORRIPILANTE BESTIA HUMANA*, 1968] and *NIGHT OF A THOUSAND CATS* (1970) received theatrical exposure in the early 1970s, and later appeared on commercial video.

Few other Mexican fantasy films have been released here, either theatrically or on video. *BEAKS* (1986), a U.S.-Mexican co-production, came from René Cardona Jr., who has also produced *GUYANA*, *CULT OF THE DAMNED* (1980) and other films with multi national casts. *THE BEES* (1978) and *DEMONOID* (1981), produced by Miguel Zacarias, are similar, but this type of film can hardly be characterized as "Mexican," since virtually all of the major roles are played by English-speaking performers.

The best way to see Mexican fantasy films is to watch them in their original language. Even if one has no knowledge of Spanish, many of these films are relatively

easy to follow. Spanish-language television networks Telemundo and Univision show Mexican films on a regular basis, although recent releases are more prevalent.

Video stores in areas with large Hispanic populations frequently carry Mexican films. Since newer films are usually deemed more commercial than earlier productions, stores with large inventories are better bets, although "classics" with known stars may still be found—for instance, *EL SIANO DE MUERTE* (1939) and *UN DIA CON EL DIABLO* (1945) are often available, due to the presence of Cantinflas, one of the enduring idols of Spanish-language cinema (known to U.S. audiences primarily for *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS*). And, of course, the ever-present "video underground" or "gray market" can always be counted on to offer up a fair selection of Mexican fantasy films, although often at stiff prices. **David Wilt**



1971's **SANTO VS. FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER** typifies the Mexican style of reworking classic horror concepts. (Note spelling of "Frankenstein.")

"serious" supernatural effort, about a religious medallion's mysterious powers.

In the 1970s, the number of Mexican fantasy films declined precipitously, except for the wrestling-hero genre, which itself faded in the second half of the decade. There were some "straight" genre efforts, such as the dull *EL HOMBRE Y LA BESTIA* (*THE MAN AND THE BEAST*, 1972), a routine remake of *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE*, the outrageous *SATANICO PANDEMONIUM* (*SATANIC BEDLAM*, 1973), a demonic possession tale set in a convent which set new highs for nudity and gore in a Mexican production (director Gilberto Martínez Solares—who was simultaneously directing many "Capulina" comedies—seems to have been temporarily under the influence of Jess Franco), and the conventional vampire tale *LA DINASTÍA DRÁCULA* (*THE DRACULA DYNASTY*, 1978).

The trio of films starring Jorge Rivero as El Payo (1971-73) and the two Kalimán features (1970 and 1974)—both based on popular comic book series—were above-average in production and entertainment values. In the El Payo series—unusual, quirky combinations of Westerns, rural dramas, and fantasy—Death (Irlanda Mora) occasionally steps in to help the stalwart hero fight greedy robber barons and supernatural foes; the turbaned "Kalimán" (Jeff East) is a mystical super-

hero who combats evil forces around the world.

A brief series—reminiscent of Fu Manchu in the '40s—starred Zovek, a stage mentalist and escape artist. In another mixture of the real and the fantastic, Zovek (playing himself) confronted a mad scientist who is creating monster-men in *EL INCREIBLE PROFESOR ZOVEK* (*THE INCREDIBLE PROFESSOR ZOVEK*, 1971), and teamed up with Blue Demon in the *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*-inspired *EL INVASIÓN DE LOS MUERTOS* (*THE INVASION OF THE DEAD*, 1971). However, Zovek's film career ended prematurely when he died in a real-life accident.

One bright spot in Mexican fantasy cinema of the decade was director Juan López Moctezuma. López Moctezuma, an associate of eccentric filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky (*EL TOPO*, *SANTA SANGRE*), made a handful of generally well-received horror films, beginning with *MANSIÓN DE LA LOCURA* (1971) (aka *DR. TARR'S TORTURE DUNGEON*, based on the Edgar Allan Poe story "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather"). *MARY, MARY BLOODY MARY* (1974) and *ALUCARDA, LA HIJA DE TINIEBLAS* (1975, aka *SISTERS OF SATAN*) followed. López Moctezuma's films, co-productions made with an eye towards the U.S. market, are stylistically superior to most other Mexican films of the period, but—like Jodorowsky—he never became an integral part of the Mexican industry and has made few films since.

In Mexican cinema, the fantastic is routinely mixed with the real: wrestlers fight with monsters; peasants deal with the Devil, and Dracula is befriended by winos.

Since the virtual death of the wrestling genre in the mid-'70s, there has been no consistent fantasy output from Mexico. Most of the 100-odd films made each year are sex comedies or violent action pictures, with an occasional "prestige" or "serious" film (often made with university, film cooperative, and/or government financing). Horror and fantasy films do continue to appear, however.

Among the better fantasy films of the past decade are the atmospheric thriller *HASTA QUE LA MUERTE NOS SEPARA* (*UNTIL DEATH DO US PART*, 1987), a stylish directorial effort by the incredibly prolific genre screenwriter Ramón Obón (scripter on *EL VAMPIRO* and *MISTERIOS DE ULTRATUMBA*, plus hundreds of other films); *CAZADOR DE DEMONIOS* (*HUNTER OF DEMONS*, 1983), an entertaining werewolf film; and *HADES—VIDA DESPUÉS DE LA MUERTE* (*HADES—LIFE AFTER DEATH*, 1991) a weird "Christian"-themed production featuring several well-designed demons and some intense (if low-budget) views of hell.

LOS ENVIADOS DEL INFIERNO—EL MALEFICIO II (*THE ENVOYS OF HELL—THE EVIL SPELL 2*, 1985), despite its title, was *not* a follow-up to a popular film. Instead, it was a sequel to a hit *telenovela* (a limited-run, prime-time TV soap opera), starring Ernesto Alonso, a veteran actor and producer (he had appeared in *THE CRIMINAL LIFE OF ARCHIBALDO CRUZ* and *ABISMOS DE PASIÓN* for Luis Bunuel in the 1950s) and singer-actress Lucía Méndez. This supernatural tale—directed by Raúl Araiza and produced by Televisine, the filmmaking arm of corporate giant Televisa—boasted better production values and special effects than most Mexican films of the era.

Generally, however, horror films of recent years tend towards pictures like the popular *VACACIONES DE TERROR* (*VACATIONS OF TERROR*, 1988), in which a family is terrorized in a haunted house, *PÁNICO EN LA MONTANA* (*PANIC ON THE MOUNTAIN*, 1988), featuring a monster chasing treasure hunters in an abandoned mine, and the teens-in-danger film *LADRONES DE*

ONE DAY WITH THE DEVIL (1945) is an early whimsical fantasy, featuring Mexican star Cantinflas as a soldier who dreams he goes to heaven and hell.



TUMBAS (GRAVE ROBBERS, 1989). These pictures are all fairly slick and well-made within their budgetary limits, but aside from the fact that familiar Mexican performers like singer Pedro Fernández, action star Fernando Almada, and comedian Adalberto Martínez Resortes appear, there is little to distinguish them from current run-of-the-mill Hollywood product. There are also pictures a bit further down the scale, like EL VAMPIRO TEPOROCHO (THE WINO VAMPIRE, 1989), a fantasy comedy with some crudely humorous gags (European scientists try to send Dracula on a one-way trip into space; his rocket crashes in Mexico, where the paunchy vampire is befriended by some bums), and DOS CAMI-ONEROS CON SUERTE (TWO LUCKY TRUCKDRIVERS, 1989), a sex comedy with a science-fiction premise.

Science fiction, per se, has never been a strong genre in Mexican films. A fair number of comedies from the 1940s onward utilize premises derived from science fiction (such as the Clavillazo vehicle CONQUISTADOR DE LA LUNA—CONQUEROR OF THE MOON, 1960), and some of the films in the “horror boom” had elements of science fiction mixed with horror, but aside from some wrestling-hero films (such as SANTO VS. LA INVASIÓN DE LOS MARIANOS—SANTO VS. THE MARTIAN INVASION, 1966), rare space operas like LA PLANETA DE LAS MUJERES INVASORAS (THE PLANET OF THE WOMEN INVADERS, 1965), and occasional oddities like EL AÑO DE LA PESTE (THE YEAR OF THE PLAGUE, 1978) and the futuristic comedy MÉXICO 2000 (MEXICO 2000, 1980), the genre has been all but ignored.

A few science fiction films have appeared in recent years, although this genre remains particularly handicapped by the low budgets prevalent in the Mexican industry (\$150,000 to \$300,000 on the average). RETÉN (ROADBLOCK, 1991), COMANDO DE MUERTE (COMMANDO OF DEATH, 1990), and KEIKO

EN PELIGRO (KEIKO IN DANGER, 1990) are typical examples. The first two titles are “dystopian future” films; RETÉN dresses up its routine police action in (minimal) futuristic trappings; the latter picture, directed by Alfredo Gurrola, is a “quest” film in the vein of THE ROAD WARRIOR, with the inclusion of some fantasy elements that help one overlook the production’s shortcomings. KEIKO EN PELIGRO, a family-oriented picture

(directed by René Cardona III) featuring a friendly (alien) killer whale in a Mexican theme park, includes some good optical effects of an alien spaceship, but is hardly awe-inspiring.

And so, Mexican cinema goes on, and fantasy films continue to be produced, albeit in rather small numbers. It may seem ironic that a country with such a rich folklore and awareness of the supernatural has not developed a consistent “school” of horror stars or fantasy film-

This lurid poster from THE BARON OF TERROR accurately reflects the bizarre nature of the 1962 film, released here as THE BRAINIAC.

makers. Part of this is driven by economics: in a relatively small industry, filmmakers and performers must be able to make any type of film, or be relegated to sporadic employment at best. On the other hand, the whole history of Mexican cinema confirms that as long as Mexican films are being made, there will be Mexican fantasy films. □



Another recent vampire spoof fails to amuse audiences.

DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT

A Sony Pictures Entertainment release from Columbia Pictures of a Castle Rock Entertainment presentation of a Brooksfilm production. Directed by Mel Brooks. Produced by Mel Brooks. Director of photography: Michael D. O'Shea. Editor: Adam Weiss. Music: Hummie Mann. Production design: Roy Forge Smith. Costume design: Dodie Shepard. Special effects: Richard Ratliff. Screenplay by Brooks, Rudy De Luca & Steve Haberman, based on a story by De Luca & Haberman.

Dracula.....	Leslie Nielsen
Renfield.....	Peter MacNicol
Harker.....	Steven Weber
Mina.....	Amy Yasbeck
Lucy.....	Lysette Anthony
Dr. Steward.....	Harvey Korman
Professor Van Helsing.....	Mel Brooks
Martin.....	Mark Blankfield
Essie.....	Megan Cavanagh
Sykes.....	Clive Revill

by Dan Cziraky

As the quality of Mel Brooks' comedies in general and his spoofs in particular have declined over the years, you can hear audiences asking, "He used to be so funny—what happened?" A prime example is his latest effort, DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT.

Giving Brooks his due, he has made some funny films: THE PRODUCERS (1968), THE TWELVE CHAIRS (1970), and SILENT MOVIE (1976). However, he is best known for his spoofs. BLAZING SADDLES (1974) became the standard by which all film parodies are judged. Wild, wacky, and raunchy, the film so effectively skewered Western films that it was years before audiences could again watch them with a straight face. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (also 1974) was an affectionate romp, made with admiration for the Universal horror films of the '30s, but still finding plenty to lampoon.



Leslie Nielsen captures just the right amount of Lugosi's accent as the Count, but his enthusiasm for the role can't overcome the unfunny material.

Gene Wilder (THE PRODUCERS and BLAZING SADDLES) was excellent as the wild-eyed grandson of the original Dr. Frankenstein, and Marty Feldman was screamingly funny as the dimwitted, hunchbacked graverobber, Igor.

Brooks followed these successes with 1977's HIGH ANXIETY, an uneven spoof of Hitchcock thrillers. In 1981, he tackled historical epics with the HISTORY OF THE WORLD: PART ONE. The humor was grotesquely sophomoric, and some of the jokes were older than the dinosaurs at the beginning of the film, which marked the downward slide in quality of Brooks' comedies.

Brooks returned to the director's chair with SPACEBALLS: THE MOVIE (1987). Lampooning such blockbusters as the STAR WARS trilogy, the STAR TREK film series, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, and ALIEN, the film failed to attract the lucrative science-fiction audiences at which it was obviously aimed. Although ambitious in scope, the satire is far tamer than it should be, and lots of gags fall flat.

Brooks failed again at the box-office with 1991's LIFE STINKS, a heavy-handed story of a greedy billionaire who bets he can survive a month on the streets without money or any of his usual resources. Full of stale jokes and an

ill-conceived musical production number (inspired by co-star Leslie Anne Warren's past fame in the TV production of CINDERELLA), the film demonstrated just how much Brooks' comedic sensibilities had deteriorated.

In 1993's ROBIN HOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS, Brooks poured on the Jewish jokes as Rabbi Tuckman. Brooks had previously traversed this material with the silly, short-lived ABC-TV series WHEN THINGS WERE ROTTEN (1975), and a lot of these jokes worked better then. In MEN IN TIGHTS, Brooks beat a well-decomposed horse into the dust.

The inspiration for Brooks' latest film was supposedly the box-office success of BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA and INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, but Brooks uses Tod Browning's 1931 DRACULA as his template. Unlike YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, which used elements from several Universal classics to riotous effect, screenwriters Brooks, Rudy DeLuca, and Steve Haberman seem unwilling to deviate too far from the source material, lifting entire sequences, dialogue intact, for no other reason than to remind us of our reference point for the spoofery.

Brooks packs the cast with comic actors. MacNicol's Renfield is such a dead-on spoof of Dwight Frye's classic portrayal that it rivals Arte Johnson's performance in LOVE AT FIRST BITE. The actor provides one of the film's better moments, as the bug-gobbling lunatic tries to persuade Dr. Seward of his restored sanity. Korman, too, does a fine job as the flustered Victorian psychiatrist, although he is saddled with some decidedly unfunny enema jokes. Anthony, who vamped her way through NBC-TV's 1991 revival of DARK SHADOWS as the witch Angelique, knows how to turn on the sex appeal to comic advantage, getting an amusing reaction from the timorous Harker when she tries to seduce him in her vampire form. Weber, in fact does a far better job of sending up the stolid Harker than Keanu Reeves did playing it straight. Amy Yasbeck (ROBIN HOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS), who has apparently replaced Madeline Kahn as Brooks' ditzzy diva, makes a good Mina, able to infuse the



Left: Brooks directs the staking of Lucy (Anthony), one of the few nods to recent vampire films. Below, the gory aftermath: Harker (Haberman) drenched in blood.





Brooks' film joins *INNOCENT BLOOD* (above) on the growing list of recent vampire spoofs that have failed to reach as wide an audience as serious films.

character with a sense of both innocence and wickedness once she's under Dracula's spell (an ability that was beyond Winona Ryder's range). Anne Bancroft, however, is not only wasted in a cameo spoof of *THE WOLF MAN*'s Maria Ouspenskaya, but the part is so embarrassingly humorless that you wonder just how much her marriage to Brooks will excuse.

As the lead, Nielsen performs admirably, picking up just enough of Lugosi's interpretation while remaining the Nielsen we've come to expect from *THE NAKED GUN*. He goes through his paces with obvious enthusiasm, but you have to wonder if he ever really stopped to consider whether what he was doing was—well, *funny*, because most of it isn't! He first appears in the ridiculous pompadour sported by Gary Oldman, which turns out to be the Count's hat (and crops up later in the film in a failed attempt to milk more laughs from the fizzled joke). He also has an autonomous shadow, which behaves rudely on several occasions. Brooks, never that strong an actor, is out of his league as Van Helsing. His accent wavers between German, Dutch, and Yiddish, and he's completely unconvincing as any sort of threat to Dracula. At least, he doesn't allow the character to lapse into buffoonery.

DRACULA: DEAD AND LOVING IT takes a few lame swipes at *NOSFERATU* (1922), *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992), and *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958), but seldom veers off into the slew of newer vampire movies, including *INTERVIEW*. The problem with this approach is that spoofing old vampire clichés is no

great cinematic innovation. From *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948) to *OLD DRACULA* (1976), every traditional aspect of the genre has been picked over and poked fun at. Some of the better ones, such as Roman Polanski's *FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS* (1967), and 1985's *FRIGHT NIGHT*, manage to mix equal doses of chills and laughs. Paul Morrissey's *BLOOD FOR DRACULA* (a.k.a. *ANDY WARHOL'S DRACULA*), took an effectively campy approach toward the subject, with Udo Keir as an ailing Count in dire need of "virgin" blood. Director Stan Dragoti's send-up of Dracula lore, *LOVE AT FIRST BITE* (1979), featured great comic performances by George Hamilton as the love-smitten Count and Arte Johnson as an aging, gleefully demented Renfield, but some of the ethnic jokes were uncomfortable then and are outright painful today.

The list of bad vampire parodies far outweighs the good: Jim Carrey (*BATMAN FOREVER*) would probably like to burn every copy of 1985's *ONCE BITTEN*, co-starring a singularly unfunny Lauren Hutton; Grace Jones was actually far more frightening without her fangs and claws in 1986's *VAMP*; not even Geena Davis' amply displayed cleavage could salvage *TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000* (1985); death by slow exsanguination is preferable to watching Mark Pirro's *A POLISH VAMPIRE IN BURBANK* (1980); *MY BEST FRIEND IS A VAMPIRE* (1988) was no match for *TEEN WOLF*, its obvious inspiration; and, Roger Corman bootlicker Jim Wynorski's *TRANSYLVANIA*

TWIST (1989) was only slightly less awful than Fred Olen Ray's *BEVERLY HILLS VAMP* (also '89). With *INNOCENT BLOOD* (1992), director John Landis came nowhere near matching the success of his earlier *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*. Eddie Murphy put another nail in the coffin of his career with last year's *A VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN*. And even a relatively well-reviewed comedy like *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* (1992) failed to find audience a fraction as large as that of the more serious vampire efforts.

When it comes down to the final analysis, not even *LOVE AT FIRST BITE* comes close to the inspired lunacy of *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN*. Bud and Lou were in top form, and Universal-International saw in them the perfect vehicle to milk more profit from their creaky monsters. Lon Chaney Jr. was back as Wolf Man Larry Talbot, out to prevent the Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange) from being fully revived by Count Dracula (Bela Lugosi), with the reluctant assistance of two hapless baggage clerks (A&C). For only the second (and final) time in his career Lugosi played Dracula on screen, in a performance that was amazingly layered—both menacing and humorous. His scenes with Costello were incredible, as Dracula strokes the nitwit's ego so he can implant his "simple" brain in the body of the Monster, saying, "What we need today is young blood, and brains!" While the comedy is deft and precisely timed, the studio

made sure not to mock the monsters themselves. Already seen as remnants of a bygone era (just 17 short years after the releases of the original *DRACULA* and *FRANKENSTEIN*), Universal still treated them with the respect they deserved. For one last time, the "classic" monsters got to bask in the applause of appreciative audiences.

After all this, was there really anywhere left for Brooks to go with yet another parody of old vampire movies? Even by such recent diminished standards as *SPACEBALLS* and *MEN IN TIGHTS*, Brooks' *DRACULA* is a disappointment. The staking of Lucy, an exercise in gory excess, should have been hysterical, but Brooks ruins it by belaboring the joke. The hypnosis-gone-wrong gags go on forever. Brooks injects two dance sequences into the picture, one which serves to milk yet another gag from the independent shadow shtick in the Coppola *DRACULA*, and another that is just a blatant steal from Polanski's film (known, appropriately enough, as *DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES* in Europe).

Clearly, the only fresh vein for the film to tap would have been the current trend of turning vampires into sexy anti-heroes, but Brooks' token attempt consists of but three scenes: Renfield's seduction by Dracula's brides, Lucy's pass at Harker in the cemetery prior to her staking, and Mina's taunting of Harker while under Dracula's influence. Oh, how can we possibly take *THE VAMPIRE LESTAT* seriously after such biting satire? □

Part of the problem is that recent films like *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* have established a new set of clichés, which makes parody of old films seem dated.



CINEMA

By Steve Biodrowski

GIALLO TURNS TO JELLO *Argento's latest thriller fails to thrill.*

The problem with the modern horror film is that—with notable exceptions like *SEVEN*, which usually bill themselves as thrillers—it doesn't have the nerve to truly terrify. Look at something like *HELLRAISER4*, and you'll see enough shredded flesh to give you nightmares for months—if you took the thing seriously, which you don't for a second.

One thing you can say for Dario Argento, whatever the waning quality of his recent releases, he has always played horror for maximum impact, not camp. His latest, *THE STENDHAL SYNDROME*, which screened at this year's American Film Market in March, is no exception. Unfortunately, despite his best intentions, it is also quite a disappointment, not the comeback one might have anticipated after *TRAUMA*.

The beginning is strong, introducing Anna Manni (Dario's daughter Asia) with little dialogue and no back story. She walks the streets of Florence, intent on an unstated goal. Objective shots are intercut with her p.o.v. of passing statuary. The trick is that the subjective shots are the wrong speed, faster than she is walking, creating an immediate sense of disorientation. The first two "Stendhal" sequences are great, when Anna experiences hallucinations induced by works of art, and Argento even uses the second one as a flashback to fill in the needed exposition.

The first attack by homicidal Alfredo Grossi on Anna, whom he



Anna (Asia Argento) dispatches the killer (Thomas Kretschman) in Dario Argento's *THE STENDHAL SYNDROME*.

has identified as the policewoman tracking him, is the first mis-step, more unpleasant than frightening, and the film never recovers. Unlike previous Argento films, in which naive protagonists were jolted out of blissful ignorance by encounters with evil, Anna is already familiar with violence. Instead of being galvanized into action, she is sidelined by the attack, and the plot grinds to a halt to portray the psychological

aftermath. Though this attempt at characterization is laudable, it mostly backfires, making her seem weak and incompetent: not only is she no match for Clarisse Starling in *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*; she's not even a match for the resourceful victim Jame Gumb kept trapped in his basement.

When Anna finally turns the tables after Grossi's second attack, it is an effectively cathartic moment, but it is too little, too late. And the ensuing plot twist (the murders continue, and it turns out that Anna is responsible) is no surprise; in fact, it is only catching up with audience expectations based on the amount of screen time given to Anna's disturbed psychological state.

By then, the film has run out of gas, having abandoned its best ideas. The impressive "Stendhal" sequences halt halfway through, Anna apparently having been cured. And the most intriguing idea, that Grossi never really existed, is likewise abandoned (after the initial attack, Anna claims he looked exactly like the police composite drawn from previous victims' descriptions, and we suspect that she has merely conjured him up out of her mind). There was a good film to be made from the ma-

terial, but this isn't it.

Argento protege Michele Soavi saw his *CEMETERY MAN* receive a U.S. release this March. Unlike his mentor, he isn't sticking to the giallo thriller format but attempting a supernatural horror film. Also unlike his mentor, he hasn't the nerve to play his horror straight, instead opting for the easy solution, milking his grotesque gore for cheap laughs.

As in *BUCKAROO BANZAI*, the titular character here, a cemetery watchman (Rupert Everett) who must re-kill the dead who rise from their graves, affects an indifferent attitude toward the incredible occurrences around him, but the film is unable to maintain the humor in the concept, which soon wears thin. Amazing images abound, but they are so loosely linked that it's easy to grow bored waiting for the next good one. Also, Soavi introduces plot elements and then abandons them; although plot is hardly the point here, if he didn't want to follow these ideas through, then he should have simply omitted them, because the film definitely runs too long between set pieces.

The worst thing about this flick is the way it panders to adolescent male fantasies in the most offen-

One of the many zombies played for laugh in *CEMETERY MAN*, the U.S. retitling of *DELLA MORTE, DELLAMORE*, released by October Films.



Dr. Jekyll and Miss Reilly

MARY REILLY

Sony Pictures/TriStar release of a Tanen/Heyman production. Producer: Ned Tanen, Nancy Graham Tanen, Norma Heyman. Executive producer: Lynne Pleshette. Director: Stephen Frears. Director of photography: Philippe Rousselot. Editor: Lesley Walker. Music: George Fenton. Production designer: Stuart Craig. Art director: John King. Special effects: Richard Conway. Screenplay by Christopher Hampton, based on the novel by Valerie Martin. 108 min.

Julia Roberts.....Mary Reilly
John Malkovich.....Dr. Jekyll/Mr Hyde
George Cole.....Mr. Poole
Glenn Close.....Mrs. Farraday

by Steve Biodrowski

In the wake of the many film version that have re-defined the story in the 20th century, it's difficult to remember that Robert Louis Stevenson's original novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is actually a mystery, told from the point of view of Jekyll's lawyer, who is much perplexed over what possible connection there could be between his respectable client and the thoroughly reprehensible Mr. Hyde. Of course, the twist ending revealing Hyde's true identity is no surprise to modern readers, but the tale remains effective and entertainingly told.

The stroke of genius in Valerie Martin's novel *Mary Reilly* is that she can retain the mystery structure without the actual mystery; for we are seeing the story through the eyes of a new character who doesn't know all that we know. Also, Martin adds the observation that, whereas Jekyll's colleagues may have been surprised that a respectable man could have an evil alter ego, a working class maid like Mary is already familiar with the idea, having been abused by a once kind father who turned cruel under the influence of alcohol.

This interesting literary conceit is retained in the filmic adaptation, scripted by Christopher Hampton, and surprisingly, he manages—at first—to make it work on screen as well. The problem with adapting Martin's novel is that it bears a rather parasitic relationship to Stevenson's (which, by the way, is in no way credited here). Specific incidents are implied to have taken place off-stage, and the only way to know what's going on is to have read the original. The film can't afford to assume a familiarity on the part of its audience with Stevenson's text; unfortunately, instead of using Martin's structure as a method of retelling *Jekyll and Hyde* from a fresh slant (in the way the Roger Corman used *Franken-*



Julia Roberts is surprisingly effective in the title role of MARY REILLY, and John Malkovich provides an interesting interpretation of Jekyll and Hyde.

stein Unbound as a way of retelling *Frankenstein*), Hampton uses audience unfamiliarity as an excuse to jump off into directions faithful to neither Stevenson nor Martin.

Midway, the plot starts to fall apart, when Jekyll asks Mary to accompany his new "assistant" on an errand. The notion of Hyde (who exists only to satisfy his own desires) running any kind of errand for Jekyll is an absurdity from which the film never recovers, and the sequence itself, as directed by Stephen Frears, is so unexceptional as to make one wonder why Hampton forced it into a story where it serves no purpose.

From this point, the film advances the dubious notion that Mary is attracted to Hyde. The real point of Martin's story is that, when Jekyll brings Hyde into existence, for Mary it is as if the nightmarish image of her abusive father has suddenly come back into her life. The idea that she could be aroused by this sadist, whose very existence revives memories of childhood torment, is ridiculous.

As the horror element increases, Frears' direction grows less convincing, as if he's embarrassed by the proceedings. The low point is the murder of Glenn Close's character, implied with a shadowy severed head dangling into frame; the scene has no plot repercus-

sions, because no one ever notices she's missing, let alone traces her to Jekyll's laboratory. Presumably, someone felt gratuitous gore was *de rigueur* for genre films.

The film fumbles to an ill-conceived conclusion: wanted by the police, Hyde commits suicide rather than await arrest. Although faithful to both literary sources, this seems anti-climactic on-screen, and Frears only makes it worse by inserting the obligatory transformation effect, which here resembles a baby emerging from the character's shoulder. The surreal concept is laughably inappropriate for what should be a realistic take on the material, and the CGI belongs in another movie.

Roberts manages to be convincing as the intelligent maid who becomes Jekyll's unofficial confessor of sorts. Malkovich captures some of Stevenson's original character, a slightly older man who is not at all a saint himself but a mixture of good and evil who vicariously enjoys the exploits of his alter ego—until those exploits turn to murder. Adapting this story presented difficulties, and for the opening reels it seemed that the film had met them. It's sad, therefore, to see it fall apart with another dubious attempt to transform a classic movie monster into an object of desire.

sive ways. Everett's character is the archetypal "suffering hero," never receiving any credit for his deeds. Additionally, the film's misogyny is played out in an amazingly systematic way, with one actress (Anna Falchi) playing three different characters who form a sort of composite of all that woman can possibly be, as far as the film sees it. After falling in love with all three and being disappointed by each in a different way, Dellamore finally grows fed up and kills the third, and the film is structured in such a way that you're supposed to cheer him on. Inexplicably, this film has its supporters—a thought more frightening than anything you'll see on screen.

Following the critical success of *HEAVENLY CREATURES*, Peter Jackson's *MEET THE FEEBLES* (1988, reviewed in *CFQ* 27:6) received brief theatrical exposure last year. Now, his first effort, *BAD TASTE* (1987), has received even briefer midnight play in February. A goofy gorefest, this has all the momentum that *CEMETERY MAN* lacks, zipping along from one outrageous sequence to the next without the ponderous interludes that weigh down Soavi's film. Not in the least to be taken seriously, this film is overall superior to *FEEBLES*, although the final carnage is not orchestrated to quite so giddy effect. Of course, both films pale in comparison to *DEAD ALIVE*, which took the approach here and developed it to even more outrageously hilarious extremes. If you enjoyed that film, it wouldn't hurt you to check out this early template, which stands fairly well on its own merits.

Finally, Georges Franju's excellent *EYES WITHOUT A FACE* showed up in Los Angeles last January. This 1959 B&W French masterpiece holds up better than the current horror crop, thanks to its deadly serious and decidedly artistic approach. By taking what could have been a conventional mad scientist story and treating it with utter conviction, Franju crafted one of the great achievements in the genre, a weird combo of art house atmosphere and graphic horror (the latter thanks to an unbelievably protracted skin graft operation, beyond even the Hammer *Frankenstein* films of the period, that sets audiences squirming). What's amazing is the way these contradictory elements compliment each other, to create a film truly capable of shocking and disturbing an audience in a way that contemporary, low-ambition films cannot. □

NOSTALGIA

By David Del Valle

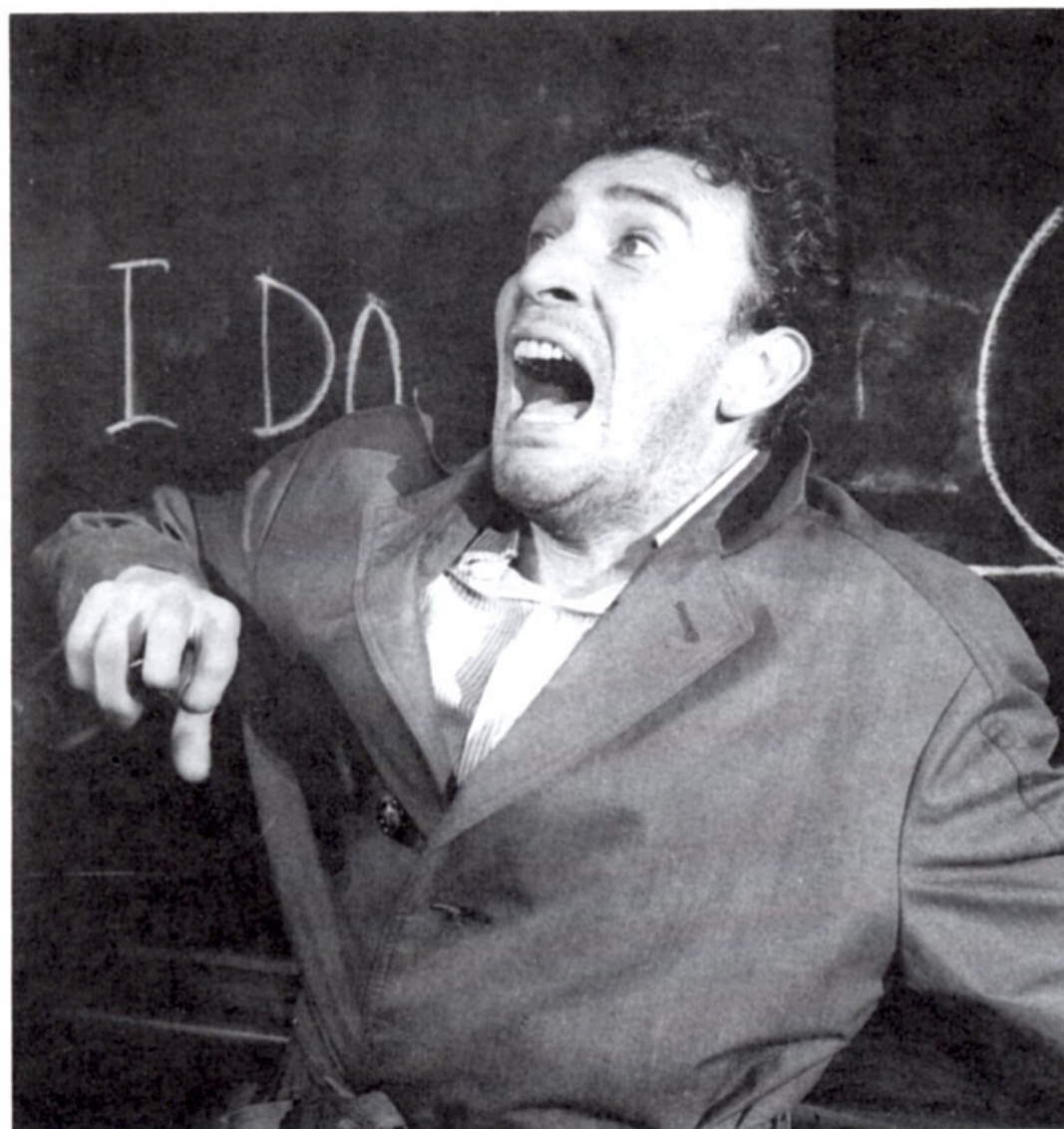
BURN, WITCH BURN *Black Magic in Black-and-White.*

The first time I saw *BURN, WITCH, BURN* was during the summer of 1962 at a seaside theater in San Diego. My mother and I were vacationing for the summer in San Diego, and I scanned the movie section of the newspaper for any horror films that were about to open. As a rule, going to a new horror film at my then-age (thirteen) usually meant a theater full of screaming kids, where the dialogue was all but drowned out by the audience. This was my experience with every William Castle film I tried to see during this period. So I wisely chose an evening performance, the last screening of the day, at 10:00 PM—a decidedly adult atmosphere.

The opening incantation read by Paul Frees drew nervous laughter from a row of decidedly inebriated sailors in the primarily adult audience, but being a kid I thought it was great, setting the tone and mood for what was to follow. The fact the film was not in color and set in England immediately made the black magic theme seem more plausible. I loved movies that dealt in black magic, witchcraft, and demonology and, except for certain references mostly dealing with the Catholic Church in some Hammer Films, my only real cinematic reference was *CURSE OF THE DEMON* made a few years before in 1958.

So I was more than excited to notice the similarities between the two films. Both films were shot in black and white, with American stars in their leads (Dana Andrews and Janet Blair), and both are taken from famous tales of terror—by M. R. James and Fritz Leiber, respectively. Margaret Johnston in *NIGHT OF THE EAGLE* gives a chilling performance as the rival witch; and of course, Niall MacGuinness in *NIGHT OF THE DEMON* gives a towering performance as the devil-worshipping Carswell. Even their titles, at least in the United Kingdom, were similar: *NIGHT OF THE DEMON* and *NIGHT OF THE EAGLE*.

Though *DEMON* remained superior, *BURN, WITCH, BURN* had many great moments, in particular the scene in which Peter Wyngarde is carrying his wife Tansy (Janet Blair) through the graveyard, which is being viewed



American International's art for *BURN, WITCH, BURN* prompted director Sidney Hayers to remark, "They certainly made a femme fatale out of Janet Blair."

through the entranced woman's eyes.

I was convinced then that one could make films about black magic only in England and almost always in black-and-white. After the film was over I felt the kind of exhilaration that comes with being thirteen and seeing a really good horror movie for the first time, not jaded by video or too many television reruns. I felt this was a tremendously special experience which could be felt only by seeing the film again.

I was to see *BURN, WITCH, BURN* three more times before it left that theater. The theater (which will always remain nameless with the dust of time) was situated very near the oceanfront, which increased the atmosphere, reminding me of course of Tansy's suicidal walk to the sea and her subsequent resurrection, appearing before her husband wet and covered in seaweed.

Thirty-three years later, I would find myself writing the liner notes for Image Entertainment's laserdisc presentation of *BURN, WITCH, BURN* in a letterbox format with both the American and

British titles intact. This was more of a pleasure than a chore as it enabled me to not only recall the ocean breeze of a San Diego summer in 1962, but provided the added kick of talking to Janet Blair for over an hour on the phone and entertaining the director, Sidney Hayers, for a lovely afternoon in my apartment.

When Mr. Hayers arrived, I opened up a one-sheet poster for him to sign, and he stood looking at it for the longest time before confiding to me that he'd never seen any of the poster art for the movie, here or in England. "They certainly made a femme fatale out of Janet Blair, didn't they?" he quipped.

I then asked him how the film came about. Mr. Hayers remembered that he made *BURN, WITCH, BURN* after the success of his *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, which was also distributed by American-International Pictures. Originally, Peter Finch was slated to play Professor Taylor, opposite Janet Blair as Tansy. "I must admit," Hayers said, "I fought against Janet's casting up until I

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FILM RATINGS

- Catch it opening night
- Worth seeing first run
- Wait for second-run
- Wait for video/cable
- Fodder for MST-3K

ANGELA

Directed by Rebecca Miller. Tree Farm Pictures. 2/96. 101 mins., unrated. With: Anna Thomson, John Ventimiglia, Vincent Gallo.

Very strange film written and directed by the daughter of famed playwright Arthur Miller, who was once married to Marilyn Monroe. After moving to a new home, the eldest daughter (Thomson) of a blonde manic-depressive former entertainer (there's the Monroe connection) becomes convinced that the unhappy state of affairs within her family is due to the presence of Lucifer in the basement. She embarks on a series of improvised religious rituals in the hope of combating the evil influence and setting her family right.

Unfortunately for her, this is not a fantasy but a domestic melodrama, and her attempts to use magic to battle her mother's psychological disorder are doomed to failure. Worse, she interprets this failure as being her fault, so she tries even harder. Eventually, an encounter with a preacher (Gallo, who gave a hilarious turn in *ARIZONA DREAM* last year) leads her to attempt a self-baptism in the waters of a rushing river, with tragic results.

Seen through Angela's child's eyes, the film provides brief glimpses of Lucifer and even the Virgin Mary, but for the most part it's doubtful that we are expected to take these visions as anything more than imagination, until the conclusion, when Angela's sacrifice does seem to have a miraculous result (although not quite the one she intended). The premise is intriguing, and the brief visions are nicely handled, but ultimately this film fails to sustain interest for its entire length. ● Steve Biodrowski

FOUR ROOMS

Directed by Alison Anders, Alexandre Rockwell, Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino. Miramax. 12/95, 95 mins., R. With: Tim Roth, Madonna, Antonio Banderas.

Alison Anders' episode, "The Missing Ingredient," in this four-part anthology concerns a quartet of witches trying to revive their god in a hotel room. Unfortunately the episode is so lame that it gets the film off to a horrendous start. Madonna seems to think that standing around looking like Madonna constitutes an acting performance. She spells cast all take the form of ridiculous rhymes. The choreography of the ritual (which inexplicably receives a screen credit) consists of flapping arms and aimless twirling, which could just as easily have been improvised. Most amusing, during the incantation, only two of the four witches strip topless, allowing the audience to figure out which actress have the clout to get a "no nudity" clause in the contract.

Things improve after that, reaching a high point with Rodriguez's "The Misbehavers." Then we get Tarantino's "The



Valentine Vargas' demonic Angelique and Doug Bradley's Pinehead in the latest HELLRAISER.

Man From Hollywood," a re-hash of Roald Dahl's "The Man from the South" (made famous as an episode of ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS, with Steve McQueen and Peter Lorre—although, inexplicably, the characters here call the episode "The Man from Rio"). Tarantino uses our expectations, based on familiarity with the original, to set up suspense and twist those expectations into humorous payoffs (much like Brian DePalma used to). The episode is funny, clever, and surprising, but the set-up goes on far too long. Also, the writer-director casts himself in the lead, as a movie star no less, and then has the nerve to include a real movie star (Bruce Willis) in an unbilled cameo. The point of comparison reminds us all too clearly that Tarantino just doesn't have the star charisma to carry a film on his own. As a friend put it after a screening of FROM DUSK TILL DAWN, "Watching Tarantino act is like going to the boss's office birthday party—you do it not because you want to but because you have to."

●● Steve Biodrowski

HEAVY METAL

Directed by Gerald Potterton. Columbia Pictures, 3/96 (1981). 90 mins. R. Voices: John Candy, Harold Ramis.

Columbia Pictures deemed this uneven relic worthy of a re-release; unfortunately, it has not aged like a fine wine. In fact, the heavy metal soundtrack, which tried so hard to sound contemporary in the '80s, is now more dated than the soundtrack of FANTASIA. The choice of songs is hit-or-miss, with little attempt to choose bands that work in a sci-

ence-fiction mode. Some of the sequences are amusing, but others lag, and there is an overall repetitiveness (e.g., all the women are bombshells who take off their clothes within minutes of appearing on screen). By the way, the sexist attitude is more glaring than ever, and are only partially apologized for in the final episode, in which the warrior-hero is a woman. ●● Steve Biodrowski

HELLRAISER: BLOODLINE

Directed by Alan Smithee. Dimension Films, 3/96. 85 mins. R. With: Doug Bradley, Valentine Vargas, Bruce Ramsay.

Miramax's Dimension label keeps another comatose series alive through artificial life support. Cinematographer Gerry Lively works overtime adding layers of atmosphere to every scene, and Peter Atkins' script has an interesting epic approach, but the whole thing doesn't add up. The first problem is the flashback structure: The film gets off to a nice start on a space station in the future, but when Ramsay's character begins relating the tale of his ancestors, predictability sets in: we know (1) that the previous generations will fail to destroy the Lamont configuration box and (2) that at least one male child will survive to carry on the bloodline of the title. In particular, the middle sequence, set in present day, is pointless, in no way altering what will happen in the future and pointlessly trying to generate suspense by endangering a child (see #2, above). The origin of the box, which takes place in the past, is at most adequate, leaving too many unanswered questions (it's okay to be cryptic in a horror film, but

not when the sequence is structured as an explanation given by someone who supposedly knows what he's talking about). When the film finally rolls back around to the future, the momentum of the opening has been lost, alas.

Bradley is back in fine form as Pinhead, although his speeches are not as well-written as in HELLRAISER III. Vargas is placed in the unenviable position of trying to upstage him, and she fails, predictably. She fills out the costumes nicely, but her acting is not up to par. In this film's most amusing moment, she lures an astronaut to his death by pretending to beg for help: the insincerity of her phony plea perfectly matches the insincerity of her every other line. Director Kevin Yager (who adopted the familiar "Alan Smithee" pseudonym after post-production tinkering by Joe Chappelle) receives screen credits for additional makeup effects, which include a briefly glimpsed (because it's so bad) Cenobite doggie. ● Steve Biodrowski

MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND

Directed by Brian Henson. Jim Henson Productions, 2/95. With: Tim Curry, Jennifer Saunders, Kevin Bishop, Billy Connolly.

MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND may not be the most faithful adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, but it's probably the most fun. Keeping the key aspects of the tale, the film tosses the novel's darker elements in favor of a lighter mood (once on the island, Kermit, Gonzo, and Rizzo fall prey to local natives who worship Queen Boom-Sha-Ka-La-Ka, played of course by Miss Piggy).

In most screenplays, such changes would be considered heresy, but this *is* the Muppets, and the story works perfectly with their sensibility. It also allows the characters to step outside of the story when possible, such as when the treasure map is entrusted to Jim Hawkins (Kevin Bishop) by Billy Bones (Billy Connolly), who then clutches his chest and passes away. "He died?!" Rizzo exclaims. "I thought this was supposed to be a kids' movie!" In another sequence, the crew members, beginning to grow weary after so many days at sea, burst into an exuberant production number entitled "Cabin Fever." Such moments transcend the whole idea of "kids' movie," making MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND play like an innocent version of a Monty Python film and endearing it to any age group.

Director Brian Henson allows the Muppets to seem at home on the high seas, and shows a tremendous amount of style, proving that his film career may some day extend beyond the Muppets. He also does a great job of bringing out solid performances from the human cast, especially Tim Curry, who brings his own distinct stamp to Long John Silver.

Technically, MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND is a wonder to behold. Filming the Muppets must be an incredibly daunting task (every scene is essentially a special effect), and this new film continues to push the envelope: the Muppets duel, swing from the mast, and essentially do things that, well, puppets aren't supposed to do.

Such is the wonder of this eclectic menagerie that sprang to

life from Jim Henson's fertile imagination over forty years ago. After Mr. Henson's death in 1990, many wondered about the future of his creations. With 1992's MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL, many of those fears were laid to rest; after MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND, those fears will be buried as deep as Long John Silver's chest of gold. ●●● Michael Lyons

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000: THE MOVIE

Directed by Jim Mallon. Gramercy, 5/96. 73 mins. With: Mike Nelson, Kevin Murphy, Trace Beaulieu.

Mike and the 'bots take on Universal's THIS ISLAND EARTH and prove themselves equal to the challenge, mounting the feature in all its Technicolor glory while thoroughly deflating its dopey plot. This is essentially the TV show transposed to film, with nominally cushier production values and almost wall-to-wall laughs (the weakest parts are the host segments inserted between sections of the feature). Best moments range from the low-comic to the magnificently sublime: the observation that Faith Domergue's sour face during one extended scene may be because she's smelling something really, *really* bad; or Tom Servo's response to alien envoy Exeter's announcement that a set of hand-grips is magnetized, "That'd mean something if your hands were metal." Great fun, this validates Best Brain's contention that one of the funniest shows on television becomes a laugh riot when viewed in a roomful of people, and it is as sequel-worthy an effort as I've ever seen.

●●● Dan Persons

MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND, not the most faithful version of Robert Louis Stevenson, but the one that's the most fun.



FANT-ASIA

By Dr. Craig D. Reid

HONG KONG HORRORS: Mystical Martial Arts Mayhem.

Interest in Hong Kong cinema continues to grow in the wake of the recent success of the John Woo-directed *BROKEN ARROW* and the Americanized version of Jackie Chan's *RUMBLE IN THE BRONX*. There is a large number of fantasy films, both new and old, which should be entertaining to fans and neophytes. Here's a sample of some available titles.

DRAGON INN (Seasonal Film 1992, 102 mins.), produced by Tsui Hark and directed by Raymond Lee, is a remake of the Shaw Brothers classic of the same title. Set during the Ming Dynasty, the story tells of a power-hungry eunuch Tsao Siu Yan (Donnie Yen from *ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA II*) who heads the evil East Chamber Sect in his quest to rule China. (Fant-Asia films commonly feature omnipotent eunuchs as the arch-villain, because historically only eunuchs could master certain kinds of mystical, powerful martial art techniques.)

The film also features Brigette Lin (*THE BRIDE WITH WHITE HAIR*) as a cross-dressing girlfriend and Maggie Cheung as a sex-hungry innkeeper who likes to bump off her male customers while pretending to make love to them, supplying her chef with the secret ingredient for his famous meat buns. As is typical with Hark's films, the battle sequences are swirlingly beautiful, as warriors vault skyward, then effortlessly maul their opponents with arrays of sweeping sword movements. It is a ballet without dancing, wonderful to behold.

Director Patrick Tam's 84-minute, 1980 Golden Harvest production, *THE SWORD* (not a remake of Wang Yu's earlier version), has much in common with Kurosawa's samurai classics. Seasoned with elements of domestic tragedy and rampaging neurosis, Tam's film affixes brooding moods to throbbing bright colors, while ambushing us with the high-flying, airborne, early ultra-violent sword choreography of Ching Siu Tung.

According to Chinese folklore, each sword possesses a spirit that sings after it has tasted blood. (The over-emphasized resonating "schwing" of the sword being drawn is an attempt to dramatize the point on film.) Sometimes a sword's spirit is so strong that it is



Donnie Yen as the mystical martial arts eunuch Tsao Siu Yan in *DRAGON INN*.

a threat to the world.

Playing an obsessed swordsman, Li Mu Ran (Adam Cheng of *ZU: WARRIORS FROM THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN*) possesses a special flair for giving the man-on-a-mission role a cynical, crafty flicker. After a cripple gives him an evil-spirited sword, anti-hero Li searches for the fabled master Hua Chen Shu (Tien Feng, recognized in American for his role in Bruce Lee's *CHINESE CONNECTION*) who possesses a positive-spirited sword. But Li's victory over the ailing Hua is a brilliant anti-climax: his ultimate duel to the death is a hot-blooded showdown with the wife-beating, arrogant Lin Wan, who is married to Li's childhood sweetheart, Xiao Yu. Li finds his warrior soul polluted by emotion: distracting desires and malicious jealousy. Lin's goal is to own both of the swords and deprive Li's rekindled interest in Xiao Yu. A revisionist genre film that chokes back any disappointments, *THE SWORD*'s rollicking nihilistic, battle-scarred characters will astound you with their endless displays of carnal swordplay, ending with a rip-roaring bloody conclusion that will leave you breathless and crying for more.

Fresh from finishing Tsui Hark's *I LOVE YOU MARIA*, director Ching Siu Tung jumped back into the supernatural with the wham-bam Fant-Asia classic, *WITCH FROM NEPAL* (Golden Harvest 1987, 84 mins). He combines his own style of camera work and editing with borrowed elements from Michael Jackson's *THRILLER* and Eddie Murphy's

THE GOLDEN CHILD, and even adds a hint of *INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN*. Sheila (Emily Chu) the good witch from Nepal, searches for the hero, who (it is written in the scriptures) must swoop down from the East on the wings of a firebird and use his supernatural powers to destroy the bone-wielding, puma-voiced, caveman-like Evil One (Di Wei). The ever present Chow Yun Fat (*THE KILLER*) plays Joe, an artist who flies in on an airplane (the firebird) from Hong Kong (which is east of Nepal). Sheila evokes a flashing lightning spirit to enter Joe's body; then after a series of erotic love scenes with the witch, and some peculiar dreams, Joe is ready for battle.

The most memorable and truly scary sequence is the confrontation with the Evil One in a cemetery. Trapped in a car with children, the powerless Joe watches helplessly as large, iron-spiked fence posts pierce the car like a pin cushion, while Italianesque zombies emerge from their graves and slough closer and closer towards them. Although the film isn't loaded with his usual frenetic style of fight choreography, Ching's intelligent use of audio and visual effects melds into an array of horrific set pieces, then explodes with a power-packed climax that makes this a must see for newcomers and connoisseurs alike. □

Films reviewed this issue are available from Tai Seng Video. Tel: (415) 871-8118; Fax: (415) 871-2392.

SCREAMERS

Directed by Christian Duguay. Triumph Films. 9/95. 105 mins. With: Peter Wellwe, Roy Dupuis, Charles Powell, Jennifer Rubin.

Lotta noise, lotta guns, lotta death, lotta blood. Not much else, though, in this weak sci-fi action flick. The set-up and exposition are too vague on details to involve the audience in the situation, so all the violence that follows comes across as just an excuse to fill out the running time. At least the cast struggles to take the whole thing seriously, making the film at least watchable, at least until the film's low point, when Weller and Rubin are asked, impossibly, to generate a little heat with a romantic embrace that occurs, laughably, in the aftermath of a decimating battle. After this, things fall apart completely, when a far too convenient one-man escape pod is suddenly introduced by the writers in order to provide a happy ending; fortunately for our hero, the moral question of running out on your comrades and saving your own skin is solved for him when everyone else is killed off. ● Steve Biodrowski

UNFORGETTABLE

Directed by John Dahl. MGM/UA release. 2/96. 116 mins. With: Ray Liotta, Linda Fiorentino, Peter Coyote, Christopher McDonald.

About what to expect when a talented independent director goes studio: bigger budget, glossier production values, less of the quirky, individual touches that made his work unique in the first place. Still, the film maintains interest, thanks in large part due to Liotta's performance. Director John Dahl has a pretty firm handle on setting the milieu and on using vivid flashbacks to portray the serum that revives other peoples' memories in our protagonist. However, the plot thins out as the story proceeds, with too few suspects involved to make the ending a genuine surprise. ●● Steve Biodrowski

ANIMATION

THE GUMBY MOVIE

Directed by Art Clokey. Arrow Films. 12/95. Approx. 90 mins. Voices: Charles Farrington & Art Clokey.

With its Play-Doh characters, low-budget look, and home-movie film stock, *THE GUMBY MOVIE* could have been a quaint movie-going experience in the midst of the current high-tech explosion. Instead, the insipid, almost incoherent story line makes the return of the '60's clay-mation TV hero a truly dreadful experience. What's surprising is that the film is produced and directed by Gumby's original creator Art Clokey, who has crafted a story about Gumby's attempt to put on a benefit concert and robot clones and...never mind. There is no attempt to bring the main character into contemporary culture, to inject any humor, satire, or to poke fun at Gumby's cult following through the years. Instead, Clokey's fashioned a film that wouldn't pass muster for the pre-dawn TV hours when Gumby used to air.

The stop motion in the film is serviceable, but with features like *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* and shorts like *THE WRONG TROUSERS* exploring the new cinematic and artistic possibilities of the craft, *THE GUMBY MOVIE* looks like nothing more than a quick way to cash in. ○ Michael Lyons

LASERBLAST

By Dennis Fischer

HAMMER'S HERITAGE OF HORROR

The studio that dripped blood is now on disc.

MCA Home Video has done a great service to Hammer film fans by releasing a pair of double bills of long-awaited titles to disc. In fact, in terms of quality, MCA's previous Hammer releases (*CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, *BRIDES OF DRACULA*, and *EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*) all rank at the top in using excellent prints for their sources and providing trailers for each title.

These new sets continue the tradition of quality presentation. The first pairs Terence Fisher's *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* with a widescreen transfer of *PARANOIAC*. *PHANTOM* was intended to provide a vehicle for Cary Grant, who expressed interest in doing a horror movie, but Grant's agent wouldn't hear of it, so Herbert Lom landed the title role instead. Anthony Hinds, writing under the name John Elder, provides a tighter remake of the overrated Claude Rains version, and certainly Fisher gives the film a big feel on a limited budget.

The real villain here is Michael Gough's Lord Ambrose D'Arcy, a caddish noble who steals the Phantom's music and is not above using some ungentle coercion in trying to bed the talented ingenue Christine (Heather Sears). One of the oddest aspects about the film is that so ungallant character never really gets his comeuppance in the film's rushed finale.

The Phantom's only crime in this film is breaking into the publishing office and setting it afire when he discovers D'Arcy's name on his music, with some acid disfiguring him in the process. The requisite murders are all committed by a character the credits designate as Dwarf (Ian Wilson), although he is nothing of the kind.

Still, the film moves rapidly and combines its most famous scenes—the unveiling of the Phantom and the fall of the chandelier—for the climax (which are all presented in CAV). This is one of the faster paced Hammer films, unfettered with a young lovers subplot, though the attractive Miss Sears does prove to be the film's weakest link.

PHANTOM is combined with *PARANOIAC*, a Freddy Francis thriller that, as Tom Weaver's liner notes helpfully point out, fails to



MCA/Universal has released two Hammer double discs: *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA & PARANOIAC* (above) and *NIGHTMARE & KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*.

contain a single paranoiac. This was the second best of the studio's psychological thrillers, behind Seth Holt's *SCREAM OF FEAR*, and features some memorable imagery of the killer attacking in a bizarre, cherubic mask. Transferring the film in its full 2.35 aspect ratio retains Francis' atmospheric tension, showing the young heroine trapped in a large empty, shadowy house.

The plot, loosely based on the novel *Brat Farrar* by Josephine Tey, concerns the return of a brother Anthony (Alexander Davion) long thought dead to a family, much to the distress of Simon (Oliver Reed in a fine performance), a wastrel who is counting on his inheritance to pay his debts, and the delight of his sister Eleanor (Janette Scott) whose glimpses of him were driving her mad. Jimmy Sangster's script provides plenty of twists and turns as well as the requisite shock and suspense scenes.

Even more sought by fans is Don Sharp's *KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*, released in the U.S. as *KISS OF EVIL* (a trailer for which appears at the end). Universal was notorious for cutting the opening and closing of the movie, as well as adding extraneous scenes when

it appeared on NBC in 1967. MCA has thankfully released the original British theatrical version, preserving the film's imagery by letterboxing it at 1.75 (not 1.66 as the sleeve indicates).

The film opens shockingly for the early '60s with Prof. Zimmer (Clifford Evans) interrupting a funeral to plunge a shovel in the deceased, revealed to be a vampire. (This was one part trimmed for U.S. release). A young honeymooning English couple (Edward de Souza and Jennifer Daniel) come motoring into the town at the turn of the century and discover that not only is gas hard to come by in such a remote location, but also that the town's hotel is almost entirely deserted.

The couple who run the local hotel are sympathetic figures (they have lost a daughter to an unnamed malady), but they also encourage the visiting couple to visit Dr. Ravna (Noel Willman), the nobleman vampire terrorizing the town with his cult of the undead. There is a brief variation on *THE LADY VANISHES* after the vampire cult has stolen the bride and no one will admit to seeing her, but we never question the truth of the situation, having seen it, and Zimmer quickly dispels Gerald's

paranoid unease by acknowledging his wife's previous presence.

The film is often remembered for providing the inspiration for the vampire dance sequence in Polanski's *FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS*, which tackled similar imagery on a bigger budget, but Sharp proves no slouch at suggesting a pervasive evil has descended on this forlorn countryside. Its primary deficiencies are the anemic performances by the honeymooning protagonists and the unconvincing climax, in which Zimmer summons bats from hell to tear apart the vampires—a spectacular idea that fails in the execution (frankly, apart from some animated bats circulating a bellfry, the Hammer special effects team headed by Les Bowie was not up to it).

All the dissolves in this beautiful 35mm print, which is digitally mastered, suffer from the abrupt graininess that results when an optical effect (one more generation removed from the original negative) is simply cut into the middle of the shot (a failing common to many films of the era), and there is one point where the soundtrack gains some noise; otherwise, this is a sharp transfer of a film long sought by many.

This film is paired with *NIGHTMARE*, another widescreen Freddy Francis psychological thriller and, unfortunately, one of the duller ones. The film breaks into two almost separate parts. The first involves a young girl (Jennie Linden) coming home from Hatcher's School for Girls after having nightmares caused by memories of having witnessed her mother (Clytie Jessop who was also a haunting figure in *THE INNOCENTS*, photographed by Francis) stabbing her father to death on her eleventh birthday.

Halfway through the film, the young girl is driven insane and packed off to the asylum while her solicitor's girl friend Grace (Moir Redmond), who was in on the plot and hired as a companion to look after poor Janet, becomes convinced that her conniving boy friend (David Knight), now in possession of the estate, is plotting to rid himself of her as well. Somehow the difference between plotting and plodding seems to have

escaped the filmmakers, who fail to build atmosphere, thrills or tension and compound the error by switching main characters midway through.

Another recent and welcome release is Columbia/Tri-Star's disc of *REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, which features a sharp print with subdued color. Although talky by today's standards, the film is probably an improvement on its predecessor: Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein escapes the guillotine prepared for him at the end of *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (still unavailable on laser) and relocates to Carlsbruck where he sets up practice as Dr. Stein. The Frankenstein character remains morally ambiguous: we admire his opposition to the stuffy medical establishment who resent his ability to steal away their patients through his superior skill, and he has set up a ward for the poor and downtrodden; but he also cruelly maims the indigent to further his experiments in tissue reanimation, making him both admirable and despicable.

The supporting cast is good, including Lionel Jeffries and Michael Ripper as resurrectionists; Francis Matthews as Dr. Stein's dedicated assistant who knows when it's time to get out of town better than his mentor does and who succeeds at the end where Stein had failed; Oscar Quitak as the pathetic, deformed Karl, who looks to Stein to provide a new body; and Michael Gwynn, touchingly as the recipient of Karl's brain who unwittingly becomes a raving cannibal after receiving a head trauma following the operation—he gives the "creature" more paths than most this side of Karloff's own masterful performance.

Warner Bros. only has three of its Hammer titles out on disc: an excellent print of *THE MUMMY*, the G-rated version of *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH*, and an inferior print of *HORROR OF DRACULA*. The later disc is slightly red, missing the subtle blues and grays of a good IB Technicolor print, suffers from some speckling, particularly in Chapter 6, and has had the blood that wells up when Lucy is staked by Van Helsing edited out, though it appears on the videocassette transfer. On the plus side, the material presented after Lucy's staking is all in CAV. Reportedly, Warners received a lot of grief

continued on page 61

The importance of fantasy & imagination

A LITTLE PRINCESS

Director: Alfonso Cuarón. Producer: Mark Johnson. Executive producers: Alan C. Blomquist & Amy Ephron. Editor: Steven Weisberg. Director of photography: Emmanuel Klubezki. Production designer: Bo Welch. Music: Patrick Doyle. Written by Richard LaGravenese and Elizabeth Chandler, based on a novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Warner Bros. 5/95, 98 mins.

Sara Crewe	.....Liesel Matthews
Miss Minchin	.....Eleanor Bron
Father/Prince Rama	.....Liam Cunningham
Becky	.....Vanessa Lee Chester
Ram Dass	.....Errol Sitahal
Amelia Minchin	.....Rusty Schwimmer

by Dennis Fischer

While there was a renaissance of great family films last year (*BABE*; *TOY STORY*, etc.), one of 1995's best, *A LITTLE PRINCESS*, failed to find its audience, despite rave reviews and two separate releases.

Though its fantasy elements are slight, the importance of fantasy and imagination is the theme of this charming adaptation of the classic novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett (*The Secret Garden*). The heroine is young and innocent Sara Crewe (Liesel Matthews), whose upbringing in India has supplied her with a store of wondrous tales with which she delights her fellow students and which help her through her bad times. (Like a hero in a Greek tragedy, she goes from an elevated position to a very poor one but still retains her essential nature). She has been taught the folk wisdom that all girls are princesses, however great or mean their lot in life, a notion which brings her into conflict with Miss Minchin (*BEDAZZLED*'s Eleanor Bron), proprietor of a Seminary for Girls and the figurative wicked stepmother of the piece.

The girls at Miss Minchin's school are made almost comatose by nightly readings from the classics, which celebrate financially sound marriages and condemn flights of fancy, when Sara decides to alter the story to something more suitable for these young girls' tastes. This leads to a series of secret, late night sessions where she relays her tales of Prince Rama fighting the dreaded ten-headed Ravana (depicted via some very effective use of CGI).

One of the hardest tasks of a storyteller is to make goodness interesting. *A LITTLE PRINCESS*' Sara Crewe joins the ranks of fellow shining examples as Oliver Twist and Heidi in portraying the generous spirit and good heart that



Miss Minchin (*BEDAZZLED*'s Eleanor Bron) introduces Sara Crewe (Liesel Matthews) and her father (Liam Cunningham) to the girls at boarding school.

represents the best of what mankind has to offer.

The film condemns racism in a subplot about Sara's befriending Becky (Vanessa Lee Chester), an ostracized black servant girl, and pleads for compassion for the homeless by making these elements integral to the story without any obvious or overt moralizing. Nor does the film depict its morality in simple stereotypes.

When Sara's father is orphaned by her father's reported death in WWI, Minchin takes Sara's possession as recompense and reduces her to a servant. While Miss Minchin proves as cruel as her view of the world, she is also allowed a very human moment where we can glimpse her inner pain as Sara asks her if her father had never told her she was a princess.

Mexican-born director Alfonso Cuarón brings a deft touch to the proceedings, keeping the sentimentality in the wonderful script by Richard LaGravenese (*THE FISHER KING*) and Elizabeth Chandler from slopping over into bathos, wringing richly effective performances from his players, as well as providing the limited settings with a resplendent visual style. The production design by Bo Welch creates an imposing environment for Minchin's school by utilizing delightfully detailed oversized and imposing sets that

nonetheless retain believability. Cinematographer Emmanuel Klubezki excels in giving the film a warm, nostalgic glow throughout and creating an atmosphere appropriate to each sequence.

The film is full of effective, subtle touches. As Sara bids goodbye to her father at the school, the outside world has the appearance of a faded picture postcard while the interior is warm and live with light and life. Cuarón manages to make his symbols (suddenly snuffed out candles, a black balloon, a yellow rose) suitably integrated into the narrative without distracting from it. His film constantly delights the senses, as in the way Patrick Doyle's music insinuates Eastern melodies to add a touch of magic or the way Klubezki's cinematography captures the reflecting gleam off the hardwood floor that Sara must scrub.

The most important sense it evokes, however, is the sense of wonder. Fantasy is what keeps Sara's hopes and dreams live, comforting her when she is daunted and depressed. Her lushly illustrated tales also set the stage for when some real magic enters Sara's life, and despite the use of an almost Dickensian set of coincidences, the narrative reaches a highly satisfying conclusion. A sumptuous banquet, *A LITTLE PRINCESS* is a true family film treat. □

Richard LaGravenese on scripting the best film you didn't see last year, **A LITTLE PRINCESS**

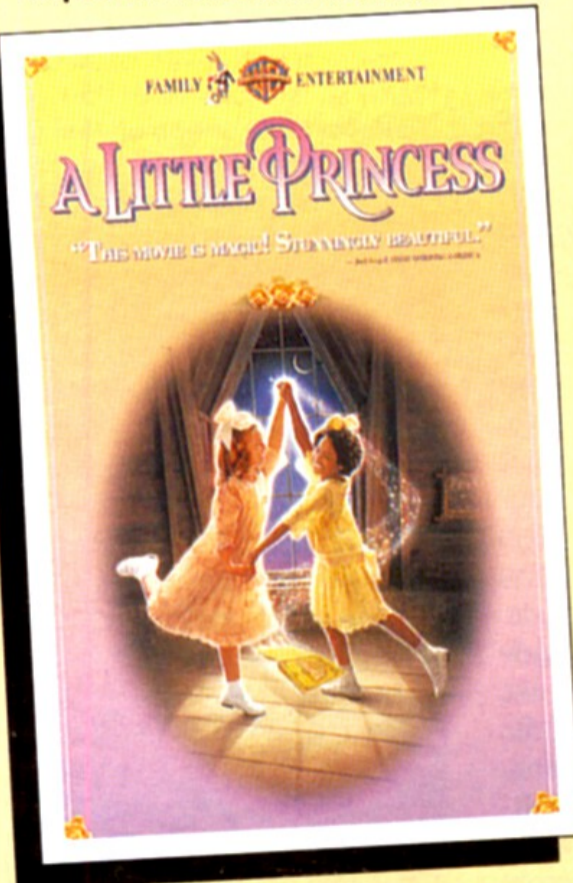
By Michael Lyons

Okay, so you've made a wonderful movie. It's based on a beloved book that's translated into an entertaining and uplifting screenplay. The direction has incredible artistry and style. The acting is flawless. Many are calling it the best family film of the year. It's an all around success—except that no one goes to see it.

That was the mystery of *A LITTLE PRINCESS*, last year's adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel about a young girl who uses her imagination to escape the oppression of a dismal boarding school. Screenwriter Richard LaGravenese (*THE FISHER KING*, 1991), who adapted the book for the screen, along with Elizabeth Chandler, initially wasn't surprised by the fact that the film didn't perform well at the box office. "I knew that it had opened at the wrong time," he said. "I don't think Warner Brothers knew what they had until it was too late."

Opening early last summer, a time when Hollywood traditionally begins rolling out its high octane action movies, *A*

Warner Brothers poster art for the film failed to attract audiences, despite rave reviews from critics.



Sarah's elaborate birthday part: her exalted status is about to come to a crushing end with news of her father's death.

LITTLE PRINCESS never really got a foothold at the box office. "We got beaten to death by *CASPER* and *DIE HARD*," noted LaGravenese. Warners was so embarrassed by their fumbling of the initial release that, toward the end of the summer, they actually tried again (something that nobody but Disney seems to do anymore). At the time, Rob Friedman, president of advertising and publicity for Warners, tried to lay the blame for failure on the film itself, telling the *Los Angeles Times*, "My own interpretation is that the movie was not appealing to kids. It had no special effects; it was not a well-known property; it wasn't required reading in schools; it had no product tie-ins." No special effects? Apparently, Friedman must have stepped out for a cigarette every time the CGI kicked in, depicting Sarah's tale of Prince Rama fighting the dreaded ten-headed Ravana.

Unfortunately, the second release—although it brought with it a new campaign, complete with different poster artwork—was still to no avail. Once again, the film failed at the box office, its total domestic gross barely

passing the \$10-million mark. After that it was relegated to home video, where it went on to become one of last year's greatest word-of-mouth movies. (For those keeping count: with a budget of \$16-million, the film still stands of chance of breaking even with money from ancillary markets—foreign distribution, cable, etc.)

One of *A LITTLE PRINCESS*'s strongest suits is obviously its story, which has that rare appeal for all ages. LaGravenese admits that he did take some liberties when translating Burnett's work. "It's a beloved novel, but I wanted to make it more emotional. It was a little cold. In the book, the father really is dead [in the film he turns out to be missing in action], and the whole idea of storytelling is not as prevalent. I created the Indian myth to juxtapose what she [Sarah Crewe] was going through and as a means to express how important storytelling was to her and to everyone."

One of Richard's prime objectives while writing the script was not to talk down to his intended young audience. This meant that he couldn't shy away from the film's darker elements. "I remember growing up, and the children's movies that I loved were the movies that allowed me to feel adult emotions, like fear or sadness," he said. "Movies like *BAMBI* or *THE WIZARD OF*

OZ. These are movies that, when you see them as a kid, can actually freak you out—a mother dying, this horrible witch. Lately, movies have been a little sanitized for kids." By not sugar coating the story, LaGravenese made it richer, turning the schoolmaster into a more ominous villain and allowing the audience to share in Sarah's emotions when she learns of her father's death.

According to LaGravenese, such "fear factors" are actually wonderful journeys for children to take. "When kids can go through that in a movie theatre, I think they feel great, because they feel like they've survived something. They can feel these horrible emotions, like the death of a father or a father not recognizing them, and then come out the other end of it feeling more like adults." The screenwriter also notes that such ominous elements have been in children's literature for many years. "Look at fairy tales. The ones that most children grow up on are very dark, but that's healthy, because it's given voice and reflection to those parts of us that we ultimately have to deal with."

A LITTLE PRINCESS has much in common with those classic fairy tales, providing "voice and reflection" to a whole new generation—if only that generation will make the effort to discover this wonderful treasure. □

BIBLIOFILE

By Mike Lyons

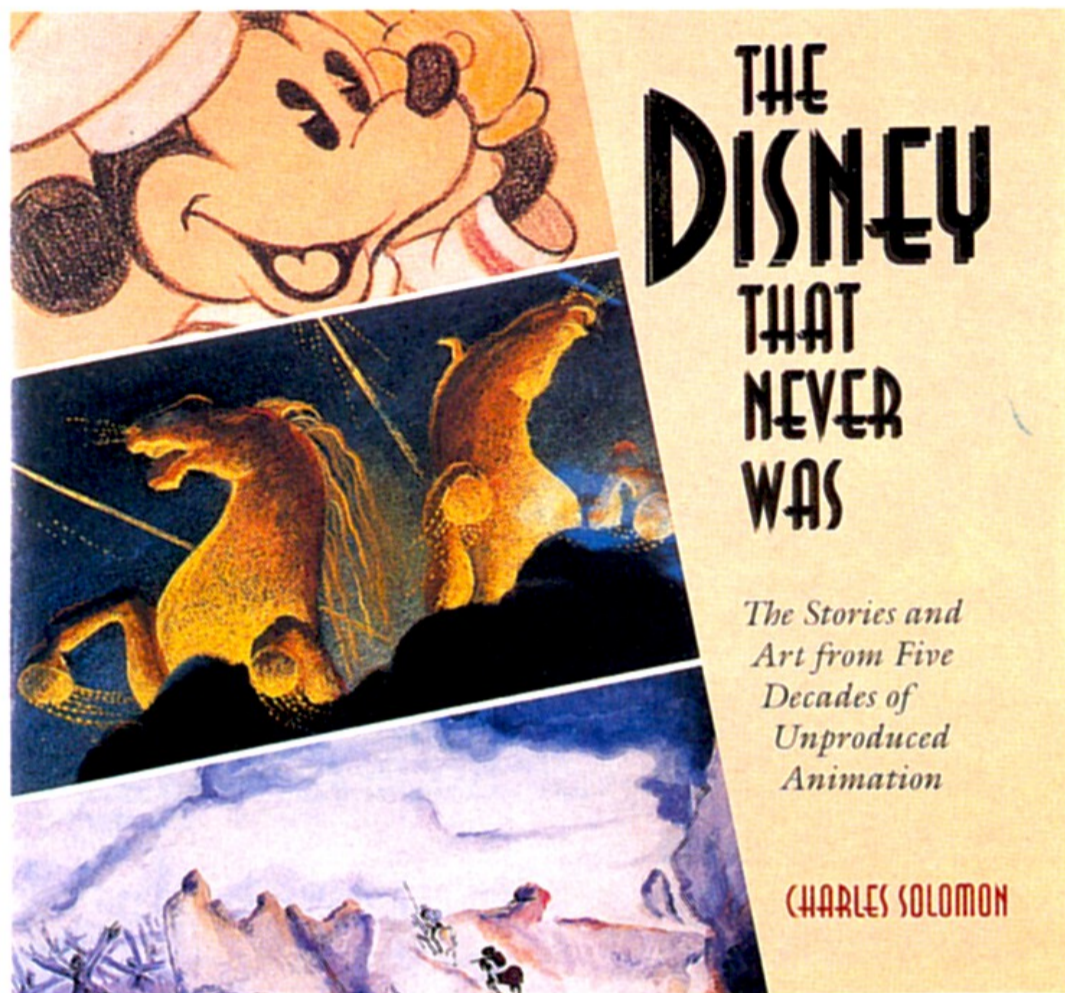
THE DISNEY THAT NEVER WAS A look at unmade animation.

At the Disney studio, an overactive imagination is both a blessing and a curse; a blessing in that it has provided audiences with animation's greatest moments and a curse in that not all of those moments have made it to the screen. Through the years, Disney, like many studios, has been forced to scrap certain projects, for various reasons. These aborted features and shorts have left behind artwork and stories that have been gathering dust in the Disney archives...until now.

Charles Solomon, a noted animation historian and author of *Enchanted Drawings*, one of the greatest resources on the history of animation, has unearthed these unproduced films in his book, *The Disney That Never Was*. Solomon came upon the idea for the book when Disney artist and voice actor Tony Anselmo took him on a tour of artwork from the studio's uncompleted films. "I was just dazzled by it," recalled Solomon. "The paintings and drawings in there are just so extraordinary that it seemed that this stuff deserved more of an audience." The studio's archives made the exhaustive research easier, allowing Solomon to gain more insight into the man who built the Mouse. "This really let me see Walt at work in a way that I didn't feel I had before," said Solomon. "This was a man who could have all these films in production and could focus on one tiny bit of a character's personality, so carefully and with so much concern, yet still juggle all these other projects and run a studio."

The book reveals pencil drawings from such unmade shorts as *MICKEY'S TOOTHACHE*; storyboards show that Goofy would have shown audiences *HOW TO BE A COWBOY*; and Clarabelle Cow was to star in a Busby Berkeley sequence, subsequently cut from *MICKEY'S FOLLIES*.

The Disney studio, however, is most popular for its full-length animated features. One of the most fascinating of these would have been *HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON*, a proposed co-venture between Disney and Samuel Goldwyn. The Goldwyn studio would have produced live-action biographical segments, with Disney



In his book, Solomon unearths several unproduced Disney dream projects.

providing animated vignettes based on Anderson's stories. Solomon reveals that the current crop of Disney animators called upon this artwork (by Kay Nielsen), as inspiration for the 1989 feature *THE LITTLE MERMAID*. The book also features beautifully detailed watercolors of Anderson's life, crafted at the Disney studio as inspiration for the live-action segments. "They're very Dickensian," said Solomon of the work, "with that same sort of bleakness when he's a youth and that same feel for the 19th century. It reminds you just how talented some of the artists who worked at the studio were."

Another fascinating unproduced feature is *CHANTICLEER AND REYNARD*. *CHANTICLEER* was based on Edmond Rostand's 1910 play about a rooster who believes his crowing makes the sun rise (ex-Disney animator Don Bluth used this story for 1992's *ROCK-A-DOODLE*), and *REYNARD* came from an 11th-century poem about a crafty fox. *THE DISNEY THAT NEVER WAS* showcases pre-production drawings by legendary Disney artist Marc Davis. Known for creating some of the studio's most famous characters (Cruella DeVille, Tinkerbell), Davis considers his

unused drawings from *CHANTICLEER AND REYNARD* to be his best work.

The book also looks at some of Walt Disney's never realized grand plans, such as unmade propaganda films from World War II and even a collaboration with surrealist artist Salvador Dali. One of Disney's greatest visions was for a series of sequels to 1940's *FANTASIA*. If *FANTASIA* had initially succeeded, it would have brought about great changes. "It would have allowed Disney to continue to experiment and push the aesthetic and technical boundaries of animation in ways that haven't happened, or maybe are beginning to happen now," said Solomon.

What exactly does Mr. Solomon hope that today's animation enthusiasts take away from the book? "I would hope a little more understanding of the process of animated filmmaking, particularly at Disney, respect for the artists that do it, and a recognition for their very real talents as artists. These aren't just people who draw little cartoony shapes. These are draftsmen in the truest sense of the word, in the Renaissance tradition, in the academic tradition of drafting, drawing, and art. I would hope that readers have a little more sense of that after the book." □

MOVIE MAGIC

Produced by Dan Arden. Discovery Channel. Weekly, 30 mins, with commercials.

Special effects can be a boring subject. Once past the initial amazement of "How do they do that?" the technical details can be intimidating to anyone not thinking of pursuing a career in the field. Nevertheless, *MOVIE MAGIC* consistently manages to be entertaining and informative for both fanatics and casual viewers.

It accomplishes this by avoiding the pitfall common to most television coverage of the film industry. In an era of uncritical hype directed at blindly plugging current productions, *MOVIE MAGIC* uses its coverage of recent films not so much as a promotion for the film itself, but as a jumping off point for exploring different kinds of effects—how they are achieved now and how they used to be achieved in earlier eras of filmmaking.

For example, a recent episode began on the set of *DEMOLITION MAN* and focused on gunshot and explosive effects, now achieved with blanks, squibs, and sophisticated pyrotechnics. It then flashed back to the early silent days, when skilled sharpshooters were hired by Hollywood to fire *real* bullets at the actors.

The episode devoted to H.R. Giger's work in *SPECIES* (while not overlooking the contributions of Steve Johnson and Richard Edlund) took the opportunity to go back and examine the Swiss surrealist's pioneering work in *ALIEN*, and also made a reasonable attempt at tracing the influence his biomechanical style has had on the science fiction genre since then. Unfortunately, it also overextended itself with a not very interesting look at *HABITAT*, a Canadian science fiction production, the design of which bears at most a tangential relationship to Giger's work. Despite the occasional minor gaffe like this, the show remains a triumph of informative entertainment.

●●● Steve Biodrowski

MOVIE MAGIC used *DEMOLITION MAN* as an example of how special effects blow things up real good.



Dan Arden on producing **MOVIE MAGIC**, Discovery Channel's weekly special effects documentary

By Steve Biodrowski

If you are special effects nut who has yet to discover **MOVIE MAGIC** on the Discovery Channel, then you are in for a pleasant little surprise. The half-hour show, currently airing its third season, centers on effects, both visual and, occasionally, sound effects.

According to Arden, a "typical episode usually takes about six months, because our aim is to show how a particular effects sequence is created from beginning to end, from design through building or CGI and execution. In any one show, we'll take a current feature and focus on one sequence or technique, whether animatronics or digital compositing. We will feature and profile the main effects artists involved. In the same episode, we will look at the historical precedent for that type of effect. Oftentimes, in the body of a show, we will profile a pioneer; if they're living, of course we interview them. We even go back to pioneers who are deceased and cover them through research. In most cases, we're focusing not just on a sequence, but a specific technique, such as dry-for-wet techniques for shooting underwater, or forced perspective or makeup effects."

So far, the show has typically emphasized a particular kind of effect and how it is achieved, interviewing acknowledged experts in the field—for example, Dick Smith in an episode on aging makeups. Occasionally, however, an episode will look at the work of a specific artist. "We actually did only one episode so far, that profiled the career of Stan Winston," said Arden. "Besides covering a current film of his, *CONGO*, he had such a wealth of never-before-seen behind-the-scenes material on all the great films he had done. Because he was aware of **MOVIE MAGIC**, he was willing to share that with us."

The show tapes much more



Dan Arden poses with influential artist H.R. Giger, during the filming of an episode that focused on the use of biomechanical designs in special effects.

material than is actually aired, but that extra footage hardly goes to waste. "For our half-hour show, which is of course really 22 minutes when you take out commercials, we have as much as 30 hours of material; material we shot ourselves or got from the effects artists or licensed from the studio. A really important aspect of **MOVIE MAGIC** that I'm really proud of is that everything we're taping is being donated to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's film archives. That will become a major portion of what the Academy believes will be the most comprehensive collection on special effects in the world. Every month, we ship off 100 half-hour tapes. Eventually, all of our material will be there. Long after **MOVIE MAGIC** is off the air, that will be available to scholars. For instance, when we interviewed Stan Winston, probably eight or ten minutes of actual interview was in the show, but we did a four-hour interview with Stan.

He gave us that time, because he also realized we were giving it to the Academy. In other words, we did a comprehensive career interview, even on films we knew would not get into this episode, knowing that somebody years from now who wants to know who Stan Winston was or what went into his movies will gain from that."

In February, an episode aired focusing on the use of biomechanical designs in science fiction films. Of course, H.R. Giger was prominently featured. "This was really exciting for us. Although some people don't think of him as a special effects person, his influence on the special effects world is very important, because he's a visionary, and the film *ALIEN* definitely impacted and has been copied by so many films. In the back of our minds, he was always one of those people of whom we thought, 'Eventually, we have to do a show with H.R. Giger. I think the fact that he's way over in Switzerland meant it

took until our third season. Then of course *SPECIES* meant we had a current film. In that program, we certainly looked at the computer effects Richard Edlund's Boss Films did and the animatronic effects Steve Johnson's XFX did; but I think even they would agree that the heart of *Sil* is with Giger. For the second act of that we went back to *ALIEN* and of course there was the footage that Giger himself and his girlfriend, Mia Bonzanigo, had shot. We had access to that as well as illustrations and stills, and an interview with him to cover his career. Again, we used some wonderful sound bites from that interview, but the entire interview was donated to the Academy.

"For me, it was definitely one of the most interesting shoots I've ever been on—to get the opportunity to go to Zurich and meet him in person, to get a chance to see his home and studio where all these incredible visions have been born. Prior to the shoot, though I had seen all of the *ALIEN* movies, it wasn't until I knew we would be doing this that I really delved into all of his artwork, like the *Necronomicon* books. Like a lot of people who first come to his work, I found it fascinating, intriguing, and disturbing. I thought, 'What kind of person would have such visions that are so dark?' I was expecting him to be moody, but that wasn't the case. I found him to be very soft-spoken, gracious, warm, and patient."

A fourth season is currently in production, featuring four one-hour specials: *HAUNTED HOLLYWOOD*, on horror films, with a Christopher Lee interview; *DINO-MANIA*, with Ray Harryhausen; *WILD HOLLYWOOD*, dealing with animal effects; and *FINAL FRONTIER*, dealing with outer space, featuring Doug Trumbull. Other episodes will include *JAMES AND GIANT PEACH*; *MOVIE MAYHEM*, featuring destruction in *INDEPENDENCE DAY*; and one on makeup body alteration, focusing on Greg Cannon's work for *THINNER*.

"Of course, we go to I.L.M. a lot," said Arden, "but each season we strive to cover facilities and artists we haven't done before." □

TWISTER

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trying to get instruments inside a tornado to figure out what's going on. Once they think they know that, then maybe they can figure out what makes it come down in this specific spot."

DeBont's prep work on *GODZILLA* was good training for handling *TWISTER*'S visual effects. "Very much so, because—although we shot some real tornadoes—all the ones that have actors around them are CGI. I had been working on CGI so intensely for *GODZILLA* that I got to know the players really well. This movie would never have been made, period, if we were not able to recreate a realistic photographically absolutely perfect, almost documentary style. If they could not do that, we couldn't make the movie. So we did test with ILM for quite awhile, until we came up with the first results, which looked really promising. That happened at the beginning of last year. Before that, we had no clue, and it would be very unwise to make the movie. The effects are going to be spectacular. There are 320 effects shots in the movie."

According to DeBont the transition from *GODZILLA* to *TWISTER* was an easy one, because *Godzilla* was to be portrayed not so much as a malicious monster as an impersonal force of nature. "It's almost similar because that's what *Godzilla* is," said the director. "*Godzilla*'s not a bad boy; he's just extremely big. When he moves his foot, somebody's going to die, because he doesn't know where to put it, otherwise. I almost feel sorry for him, sometimes." □

THE PHANTOM

continued from page 9

he was in the comics. He's a little sardonic. He has a self-deprecating quality about himself. He would do something extremely brave and then put it down as just everyday work. I've kept that attitude, but I tried to peer behind the mask and get an insight of what it might be like to be *The Phantom*—burdened with this tremendous responsibility being the protector of the jungle and also having the obligation to get married and have a son that could be the next *Phantom*."

Bringing the character to life on screen offered Boam a host of challenges, and the failure rate of previous comic adaptations did give Boam reason to pause. "I looked at several movies and felt they just weren't good enough," Boam said. "I thought *THE SHADOW* was confusing and the



ILM's CGI twister test shot, seen in the film's trailer, convinced director Jan DeBont that Crichton's ambitious script could be brought convincingly to the screen.

hero was inaccessible. I felt that *DICK TRACY* was too self-consciously arty and made for a kind of Bohemian audience rather than for 19-year-old kids. So the main thing was to write this movie just like I wrote the other movies that were successful—like *LETHAL WEAPON II* or *THE LAST CRUSADE*: try to tell a fun story clearly, with accessible characters. I think a lot of problems with movies is a lack of clarity in the focus between the writer and the filmmaker. They don't know from scene to scene what the movie is about. They try to do things. They try to have an action scene or a special effects scene or a love scene, but they don't have the big picture clear in their head. I tried to write it in a way that wouldn't confuse the audience—would always delight the audience. They would like the characters and be truly interested in the story. And I tried to exploit some of the attributes that are inherent in *The Phantom*—such as the innocence of the character, his nobility. I think the mystery of the character is extremely intriguing. I like his costume, the fact that he rides a white horse and lives in a cave in the jungle. I think people will want to know more about the character. I think that beyond all the values I can bring to it, the subject matter is just a better property than some of the ones that were done, like *THE SHADOW*, *DICK TRACY*. I think it's a better idea." □

HUNCHBACK ADAPTATION

continued from page 26

The three Gargoyles evolved differently from comic relief characters in other Disney films. "One of the things we found was that the more we got them bickering, like Cogsworth and Lumiere in *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, then the

more fractured the argument got," said Finn. "The main thing was that they be united in trying to convince Quasimodo about an argument. The difference was that they all would have reasons: Victor would have the boring reason; Hugo's would be the crazy reason; and Laverne would have the wise reason for what they wanted to do."

The wildest animation sequence with the Gargoyles and Quasimodo is the song "A Guy Like You," which appears about halfway through the film, with Dave Pruiksma animating both Victor and Hugo. "They try to cheer Quasimodo up," said Finn, "by telling him how good looking he is, because to the Gargoyles he's the handsomest guy they've ever seen, and they believe it too. So there is this really knock-'em-out sequence, sort of in the grand tradition of *SALUDOS AMIGOS* and any five minutes of the *MUPPET SHOW*, where the Gargoyles just sort of go bananas and try to cheer him up because he's feeling so miserable. They give him a crazy haircut where they try to spruce him up and they play cards with him."

Finn came up with the idea of naming the Gargoyles after the actors who played Quasimodo in other films; Chaney, Laughton, and Quinn. When that died a natural death, they looked in another direction. "If you're looking for a triple, you've got Victor, Hugo and who?" asked Finn. "The only triple we could think of was Patty, Maxine, and Laverne. I don't think there are a lot of seven year olds who are going to be referencing the *Andrew Sisters*. It's a very obtuse joke." □

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

continued from page 42

THE LIVING DEAD or *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*).

Tarantino is a real movie-movie

talent; that is, much of his cleverness comes from knowing films and filmic expectations and bending them to suit his purpose or re-using familiar material with a wink of recognition toward the audience. Thus, the appearance of Savini and Williamson is amusing to a cult audience, not because of the characters, but because we recognize the actors and associate them with their past accomplishments. At other times, the writer is a bit too clever, setting up ideas that never pay off. For instance, the Gecko brothers are escaping to a place in Mexico called El Rey; the name is taken from the final chapter of Jim

Thompson's novel *The Getaway* (omitted from both screen adaptations), wherein the escaped robbers find themselves in a criminal sanctuary that is little better than Hell on Earth ("You tell yourself it is a bad dream. You tell yourself you have died...and have waked up in Hell.") One might, therefore, expect the sanctuary in *DUSK* to be similarly revealed as no safe haven at all and that Seth Gecko, through his confrontation with tangible evil in the Titty Twister bar, would change his ways, choose not to go to El Rey, and thus avoid a horrible fate.

Instead, the idea is never developed. As with everything else in the film, Tarantino seems almost frantic to throw away potentially good material in favor of impaling a few more hearts and exploding a few more bodies. Rodriguez does an adequate job filming the gobs of gore, but for some reason the action lacks the balletic intensity of *DESPERADO* that would have made one overlook the story deficiencies and simply surrender to the excitement of the on-screen carnage. Whereas one might reasonably have expected that the combo of Tarantino and Rodriguez would reach critical mass, instead of a nuclear fireball, we get something of minor blast. It's as shame to see so much good talent giving such low-yield results. □

THE ARRIVAL

continued from page 39

the future or on a distant planet. I purposely made my story contemporary to wring out very real emotions. Of course, by setting it in the present, I set myself a greater challenge: I couldn't make up the ground rules and had to stand by existing ones."

That's why casting the right actor to play Ziminski was of utmost importance in Twohy's mind. He noted, "I knew Charlie Sheen in

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passing. He starred in *TERMINAL VELOCITY*, which I wrote and executive produced. I found him a prince of a guy. When it came to *THE ARRIVAL*, and I needed an actor to ground the proceedings in a palpable reality, he wasn't the first obvious choice. But the more I thought about him, the more I liked the idea. Charlie is 30 years old now and had the right maturity that would be good for the character. I was very honest with him at the beginning. I told him the part of Zane wasn't about looking good or cool in a leather jacket with the collar turned up. It was atypical to the roles he has been offered, and I think that's why he embraced it."

The *HOT SHOTS* star was also paid \$5.25 million for his services, but Twohy thinks it was money well spent. And while Twohy didn't have a *WATERWORLD* scale budget, he feels his twist on the "Alien Invasion" genre has originality, insight, and resourcefulness to spare. He remarked, "There were no reins on my imagination with *THE ARRIVAL*. I thought of an idea; I went to Tom Smith; and he told me if it could be done or not. Usually, it could, and more often than not he came back to me saying, 'Ingenious, why don't you take it

further?' Tom was different from any other producer in that regard. He wanted me to go for bigger and better. So I did, and *THE ARRIVAL* will be fantastic entertainment because of it."

NOSTALGIA

continued from page 52

met her. At once, I saw she had great chemistry with Peter Wyngarde, who replaced Peter Finch. They behaved like a married couple from that point on. Peter would even drive her back to her hotel after each day's shoot." Hayers also spoke glowingly of the talent and professionalism of Peter Wyngarde, on whose shoulders a large part of the success of *BURN, WITCH, BURN* rests.

"The intensity of his concentration during the scenes with the giant eagle were amazing. And Margaret Johnston, the real villain of the piece, was cast entirely by accident. Maggie appeared on the set one day as an actor's agent. She represented the young, unbalanced student who tries to kill Peter Wyngarde early in the film. I wouldn't let Maggie leave until she tested. And reluctantly she accepted the part."

Hayes added, "We take our witchcraft very seriously in Eng-

land and I remember some of the technicians being uncomfortable during the black magic sequences. But the production came in on schedule and on budget, but you know I haven't seen Janet or Peter since the film wrapped over 30 years ago."

It is a true pleasure to meet people like this, who are most astonished that some film they worked on years ago has attained a certain cult status. Releasing *BURN, WITCH, BURN* on disc is an overdue honor. Needless to say, it's the best way to see this ominous little classic—outside of an oceanfront theater in San Diego.

LASERBLAST

continued from page 56

from fans regarding the disc's flaws and is reluctant to issue any more Hammer titles on disc.

THE GORGON and *HYSTERIA* (both RCA/Columbia) *QUATERMASS 2* (Corinth/Image), the *SCARS OF DRACULA/HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* double disc and *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* (both Image) have all gone out of print. *THE CREEPING UNKNOWN* is scheduled to appear on the soon-to-be released *UNITED ARTISTS SCIENCE FICTION MATINEES*

VOL. 2 box set. PAL transfers have been done for a laser box set in England for the 20th Century-Fox titles *DRACULA*, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*; *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*; and *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT*. With luck, a similar release should be arranged domestically.

Many Hammer titles have yet to be issued on disc, which would help preserve the legacy of this influential studio for future generations. In some cases, such as *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA*, there are prints with scenes that have never been shown in America which would be sure to increase buyer interest. Hammer Films revived the gothic tradition in the late '50s and added color and the blood that Universal tended to keep offscreen, revitalizing the classic monsters and the horror genre in the process. Often dismissed or given bad reviews when initially released, many Hammer films have survived the test of time and changing tastes. Let's hope the various studios who own Hammer titles will take the time and care to preserve these memorable macabre movies and present them properly on disc for receptive audiences both new and old.



A thumbnail guide to Time Lord's first three decades on Britain's BBC.

By Joseph Reboy

DOCTOR WHO first aired on Saturday afternoon, November 23rd, 1963. Kennedy had been shot the day before, and the ratings were, predictably, not very good. The BBC reran the first episode of the fledgling children's sci-fi series a week later, and born unto the world was a franchise.

Relying on a singular premise, an old man flitting about time and space with no restrictions, a mysterious background, and a handful of companions, the series proved immensely capable of bouncing from dark, mystical drama to light, lyrical fantasy, and hitting all points in between. The premise was so agile in fact that although the British were notoriously bad at making westerns, they gave it a shot in the first few years. That the story was Ed Wood-level bad is testimony to why it is so fondly beloved.

Produced on small scales, with England's high caliber actors and some very impressive writers, there seemed to be no such idea as "We can't do that." Whatever the writers wrote, the set builders, effects people, and costume designers made happen. Not always with success.

The actors to play the role each brought diversity to their



Tom Baker in "The Keeper of Traken," the most popular of seven actors to play the role on the BBC since 1963, with the most shows to his credit.

parts, and never detracted, but always added to the character. They were:

William Hartnell—Stats: 29 Stories, 130 episodes, 1963 through 1966. A favorite of long-time viewers, Hartnell played the titular time-traveller as a crafty grandfather, capable of placing his friends in danger to satisfy his own curiosity.

Patrick Troughton—Stats: 21 Stories, 119 episodes, 1966 through 1969. Taking a turn to the impish and whimsical, Troughton became known as "The Cosmic Hobo."

Jon Pertwee—Stats: 19 stories, 128 episodes, 1969 through 1974. Pertwee brought crushed velvet and elegance to the role, mixed with generous dollops of Bondian adventure. Not as satisfying a portrayal due to the more formulaic approach, but not without merit.

Tom Baker—Stats: 42 Stories, 178 Episodes, 1975 through 1981. At the center of DOCTOR WHO sits Tom Baker. He is the anchor and the epitome of what DOCTOR WHO is. He brought an alien quality to the show while making the character warmer and more approachable. He also tended to overact badly.

Peter Davison—Stats: 20 Stories, 74 episodes, 1982 through 1984. Davison's Doctor was easily bruised, earnest, and preppie all the way. More than any other Doctor, he was a con-

formist. He wore celery on his lapel.

Colin Baker—Stats: 11 Stories, 31 Episodes, 1984 through 1986. Colin Baker's Doctor was more alien and possessed the most bizarre outfit. He was affectionate to his main companion and veered between Cheshire cat and moral outrage. After his first season the show was placed on hiatus. When it came back both Colin Baker and his Dr. Who character were both placed on trial, with Michael Jayston playing his accuser, the Valeyard, an incarnation of the Doctor from the future.

Sylvester McCoy—Stats: 12 Stories, 42 episodes, 1987 through 1989. McCoy (pictured page 33) was a darker-toned cousin of second Doctor, Patrick Troughton, impish, but more of a manipulator of events. Companion Ace (Sophie Aldred) took a larger than normal role in the series. Script editor Andrew Cartmel inserted sequences in the scripts to get the viewer to believe that maybe this wasn't the Doctor after all.

Peter Cushing also essayed the role in two unauthorized movies based around the Daleks, in 1965 and again in 1966. Richard Hurndall played the deceased William Hartnell's Doctor in the 20th anniversary special, THE FIVE DOCTORS, bringing to 11 the number of actors who have played DR. WHO. □

William Hartnell



Patrick Troughton



John Pertwee



Peter Davison



Colin Baker



DR. WHO

continued from page 33

are the most important elements of the show. Our effects try to compliment this."

Case in point: the appearance and disappearance of the Tardis, which in the original series was accomplished by a simple dissolve. "Our effect is also very straightforward, with just a little twist at the end: a hint of a warp effect, with leaves and smoke blowing in the Tardis's wake," Dow said.

Despite his trepidation, executive producer Segal is happy with the way his project is shaping up—and even more excited about airing it on Fox. "The network has really carved a niche for itself delivering hip, retro sci-fi to audiences. It started with THE X-FILES, and it followed through with movies like THE INVADERS update, which earned enormous ratings."

At first, Segal envisioned DOCTOR WHO as a series of TV-movies. "But you really have to convince the network to front the money for all the movies so as to avoid the enormous costs of shutting down and starting up production for each. And networks are very reluctant to take that risk."

Still, Fox paid the largest license fee ever for a TV-movie from BBC Worldwide in the hope ratings will merit a new TV series. To help WHO's success, BBC plans to release the movie on video prior to its fall British broadcast. Marvel will offer a *Who* comic, and the film novelization will be published by BBC books in May.

If the hoopla does nothing else, it will fulfill Segal's lifelong dream. "My wife often asks me what has driven me all these years. The only answer I can give is I'm a sci-fi nut and a WHO fanatic," he says. "I first got hooked as a little boy, when my granddad opened up the *Radio Times* and I saw the advertisement for the pilot episode. I saw every episode since, and it took my breath away. Now it's my turn to do the same for others. I hope they love it." □

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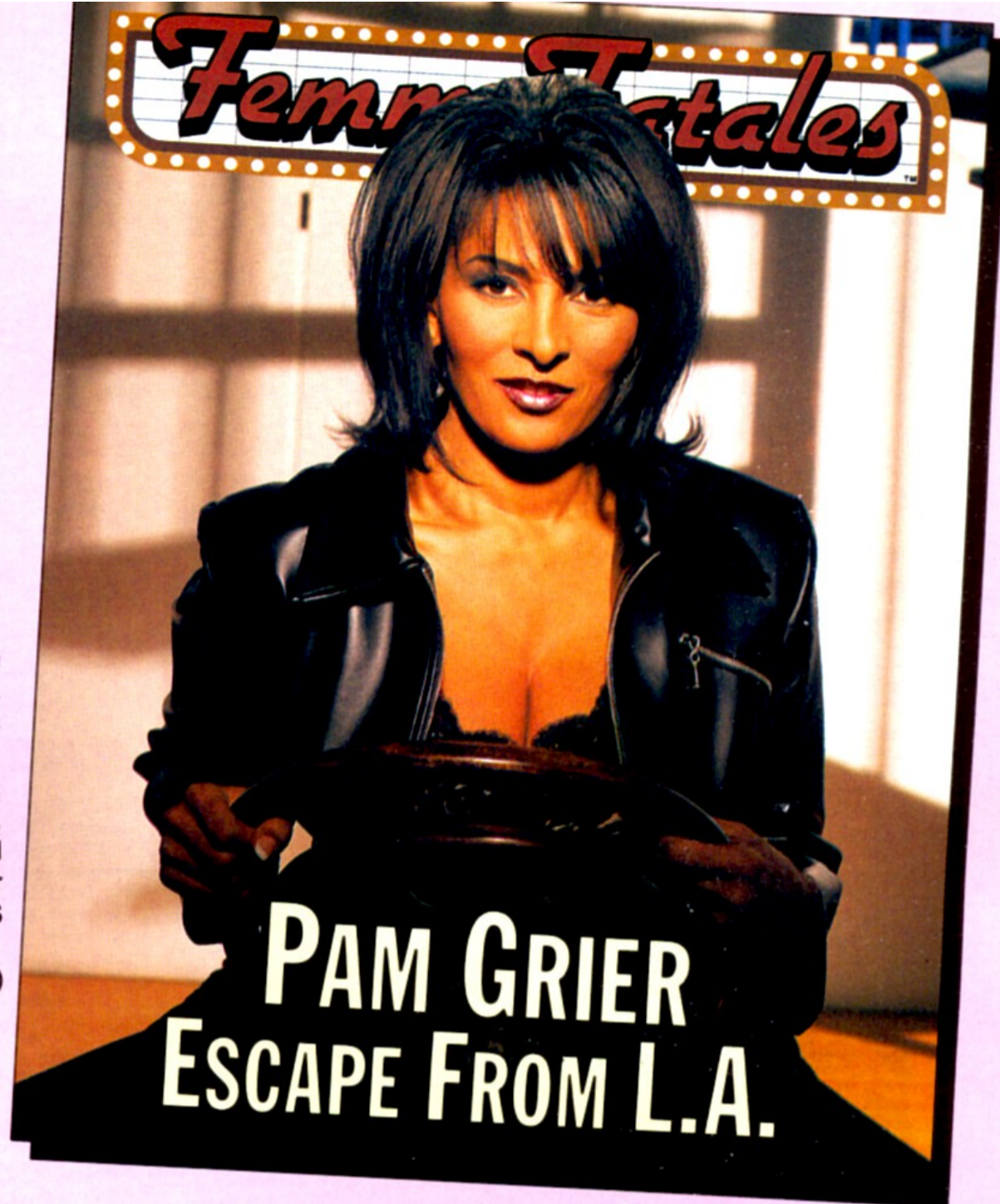
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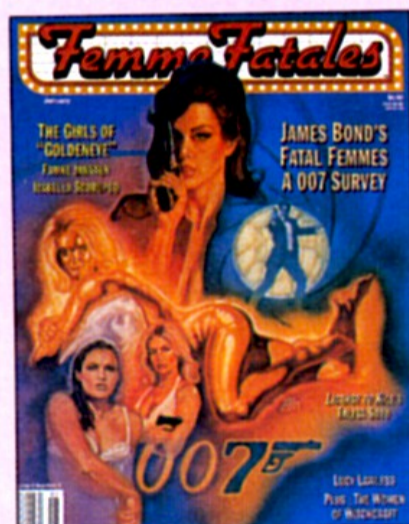
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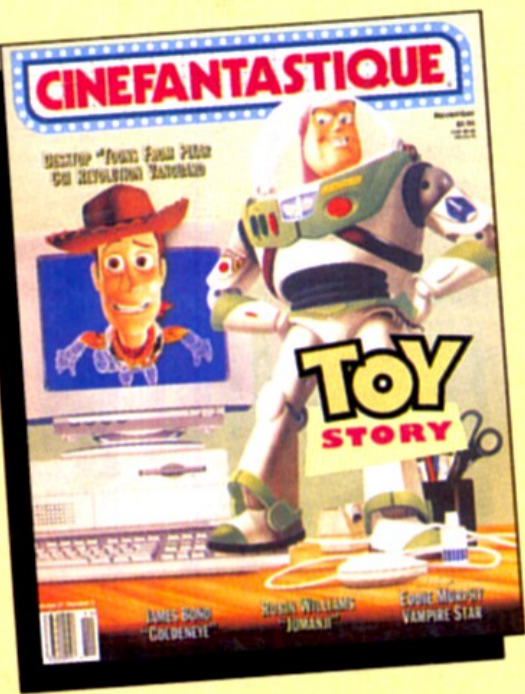
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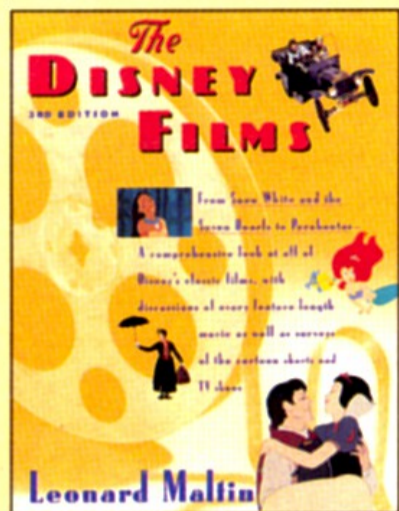
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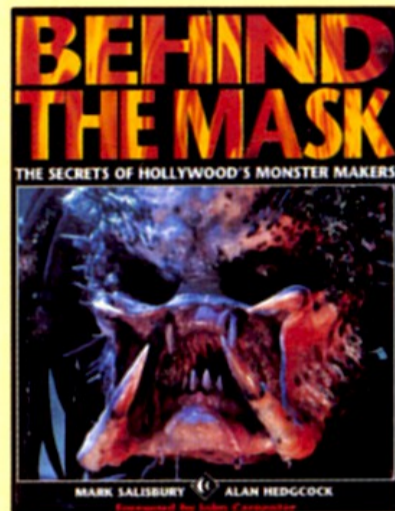
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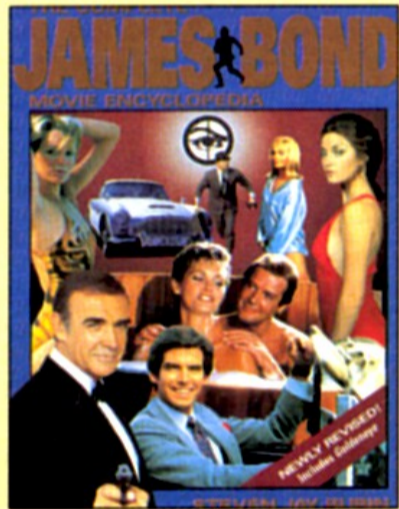
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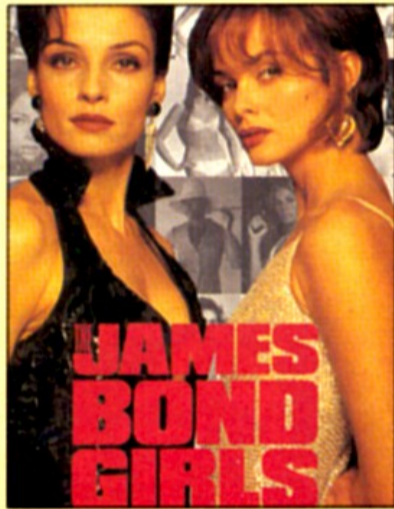
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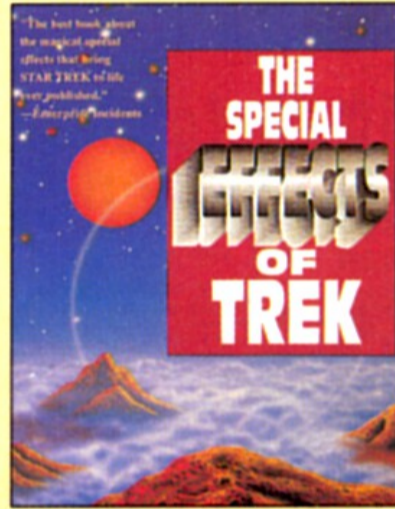
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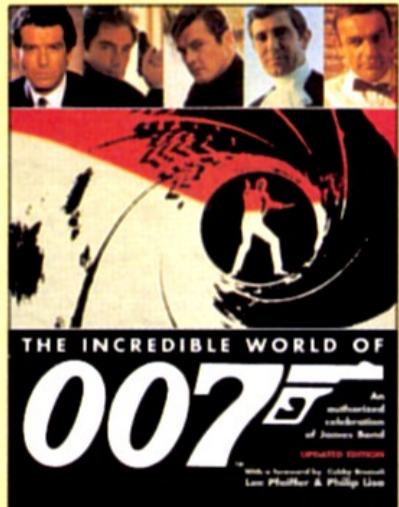
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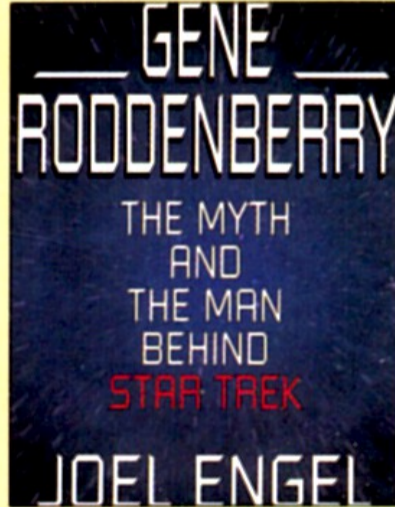
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This collection of H.R. Giger's design sketches for the movie SPECIES is the most elegantly disturbing gallery of artwork ever assembled for any filmmaking endeavor. Producer Frank Mancuso Jr.'s challenge to Giger and Giger's reasons for accepting his challenge provide a fascinating context for the designs. **\$29.50**